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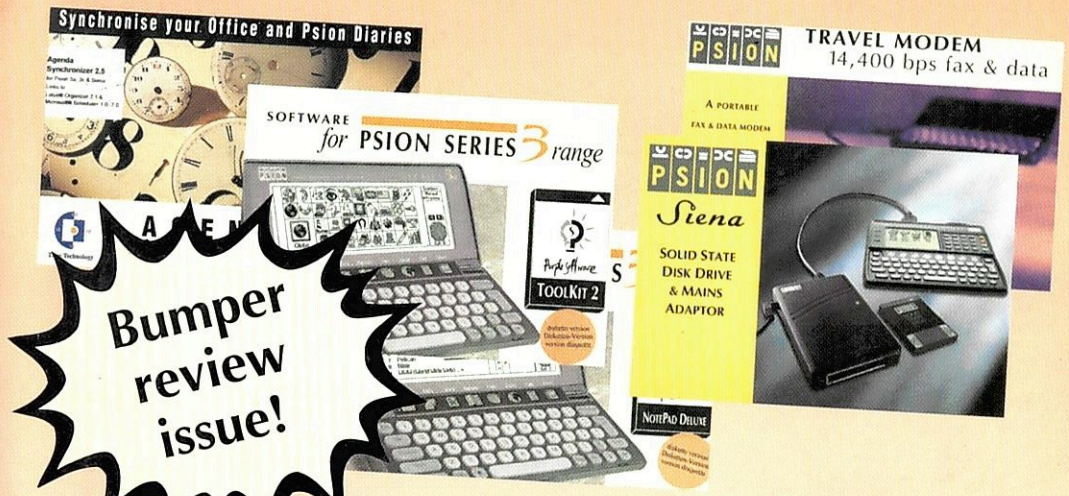
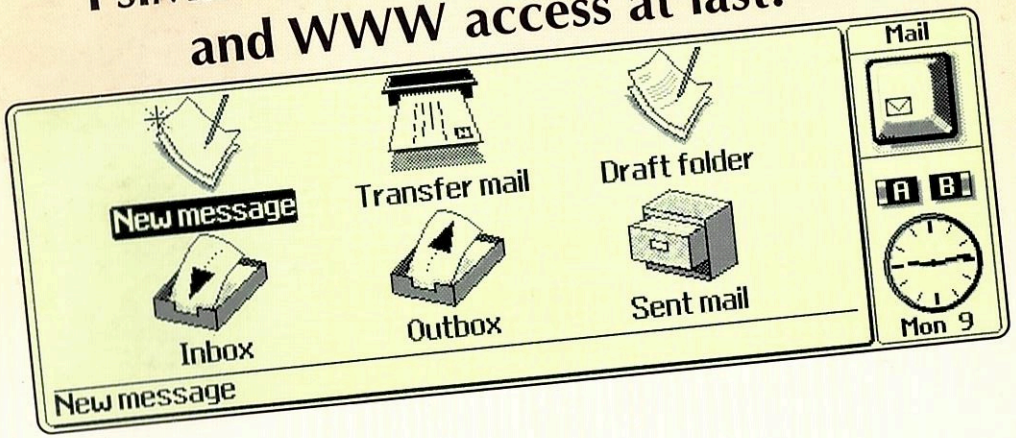
Palmtop

The journal for today's Psion user

Issue 10 Bimonthly



PsiMail Internet—Seamless e-mail and WWW access at last!



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Palmtop

The journal for today's Psion user

Palmtop is...

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Thanks...

...To all the contributors whose names appear within the magazine, particularly Steven Murgan, Leigh Edwards and Rick Andrews for their regular contributions. Thanks also to Chris Love at Clove Technology for various contributions and supply of review material, and to all those who have kindly supplied their products for evaluation.

Address

All requests for subscriptions or back issues and any comments or criticisms regarding the content of *PALMTOP* should be directed to the editor at the following address:

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Any contributions of material published within the pages of *PALMTOP* (excluding 'On The Net') will earn the author a minimum of one free issue added to their subscription. If you wish to write feature articles for the magazine then please contact the editor to discuss your ideas.

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General

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Editorial

I have never seen anything like it. Ever since *Palmtop* began we've always been lucky enough to have more material than we knew what to do with, but the situation at this moment is astonishing. The volume of new products is expanding every month, and despite our constant expansion of the magazine we never have the space to cover all the things that are happening in the Psion world.

Every week new products land at the *Palmtop* office for review, and every week we agonise over how we're going to cover them all. To say that the Psion marketplace is burgeoning would be an understatement.

This is of course very, very healthy. Things will certainly be tougher for Psion in the coming months: with Apple having just announced a 160Mhz *StrongArm* version of the *Newton* handheld and the Goliath of Microsoft moving in from the wings with their new *Microsoft CE* (Consumer Electronics) handheld devices.

A number of Psion users have asked us—'does this competition spell the end to Psion's domination of the handheld market?' From what I see of the Psion market from day to day I just can't see it contracting—quite the opposite in fact.

If there's such a thing as a 'critical mass' of peripherals, software and support services to ensure a product's continued success then Psion have surely reached it. Of course they must endlessly continue their product development with all speed to be sure they're not overtaken, but I hope we can rest assured that they're all working hard doing *exactly* that. Let's not forget that they have the best part of ten years head start on most of the competition, and until someone else's product arrives to wipe the floor with them I think we have to assume that Psion are doing the necessary development to stay on top.

Another important factor is that many of Psion's present and future competitors make a lot more than just palmtop computers. For Psion, palmtop computers are *all* they do—if they don't stay on top then they can't just abandon the market and go back to making video recorders and pencils—and there is currently *no* other company in the World in their position. I really think they're a force to be reckoned with...

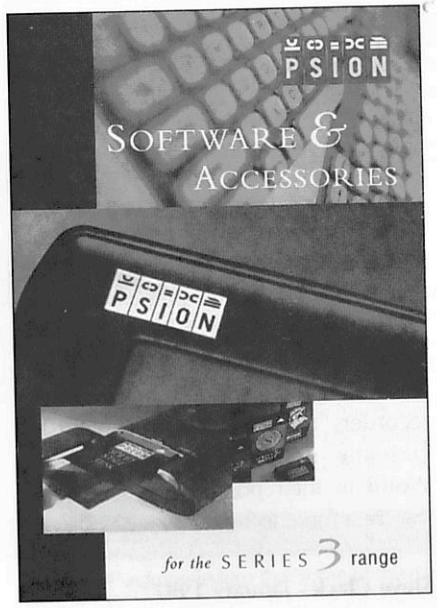
Steve Clack - January 1997

Palmtop News

The latest hot gossip on what's happening in the Psion world

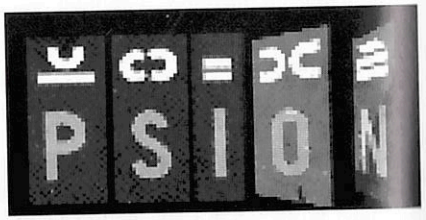
New software catalogue

The 1997 edition of Psion's *Software & Accessories Catalogue* is now beginning to be distributed. Anyone purchasing a new machine will receive a copy when registering their warranty details, and copies are kept by most major UK retail outlets. The bumper 66 page product catalogue contains details of all major commercial software packages, plus details of associated hardware, peripherals, consultancy services and books.



Siena Emulator available

A few new goodies have appeared on the Psion web site in the last few weeks. As well as the press release announcing the new Internet software, the excellent Siena emulator has been released, an interactive demonstration of the Siena's facilities is available, developers can take a look at the OVAL tools, and a Psion screen saver for your PC can be downloaded too. Check out *http://www.psion.com/* for more details.



Psion's new PC screen saver

57,600bps Siena due

New Sienas will shortly be supplied with a 57,600bps RS232 port instead of the 19,200bps variant supplied to date. This brings Siena comms into line with the Series 3c, being 3 times faster than the RS232 port on the Series 3a .

More delays...

Psion are suffering more delays to their product release dates, with their Monopoly game still not widely available at the time of going to press, and Expense Tracker, PsiMail Internet, PsiFax software *and* the PCMCIA card adaptor all delayed until February or beyond. The Psion Travel Modem is now available, but in limited quantities at present.

The 3c/Siena version of the Macintosh link is still not available, though Psion claim 'any day now'. As always we'll keep you posted with news and reviews as early as possible.

Print link problems

Psion have recently been forced to recall their new 3c/Siena parallel print links due to a bug in the built-in firmware. No date has yet been given for the re-release, but this compounds frustrations for 3c/Siena owners who have had their machines since their release in October, and who still don't have any way to print.

No AutoRoute upgrades

Microsoft have announced that they will not be producing any further updates to AutoRoute Express, the immensely successful UK route planning software for the 3a/3c. They will presumably be concentrating their future efforts on providing software for the new Microsoft CE platform...

New Psion faxback service

Psion have just introduced a new 'Faxback' service to enhance their technical support.

Customers can call 0891 515432 and be guided through the steps to get any or all of Psion's help guides and information sheets sent to their fax address,

without having to queue or speak to support staff.

It works thus: ring the number (a premium rate number, but the call should take no longer than a minute) and follow the instructions to get an index page sent to you. Psion pay the costs of faxing the information.

When you have the index page, select the appropriate section and document number, ring the number again and follow the new instructions.

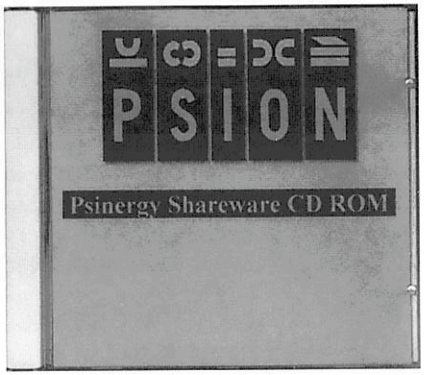
The service works 24 hours a day, will be updated as new material becomes available, and will be further expanded if successful.

The documents have all been compiled by Psion Technical Support staff, who use them for their own reference.

The documents make most interesting reading, and are well thought out. The index contains well over 100 pages already, covering everything from how to connect to a CompuServe account using your 3Fax, to the correct pronunciation of 'Psion' [the p is silent, hence 'sion' or syon'].

New shareware CD-ROM

A new shareware CD-ROM is available from Galactic Computing. The current edition of the disk contains over 1,700 zipped programs, Psion-related documents and compressed books (TCR files), and the suppliers intend to offer



updates by returning the multi-session CD back to them. The CD-ROM is priced at £15 including VAT and postage within the UK. Overseas customers please contact Galactic computing directly for shipping costs.

A full review will appear in the next issue of *Palmtop*.

Galactic Computing Ltd
tel: (01779) 813041 or (0385) 564032

On-Board Info releases...

A new company, *On-Board Info* have jumped into the Psion marketplace with three interesting looking new products. Each attractively and professionally packaged product contains two or three 3½" PC floppy disks containing various programs.

New releases are:

Notable Dates and Events 1997 - full listings of important dates for importing into your Psion AGENDA—including

hundreds of sporting, business and cultural events, with full coverage of UK, USA, France and Germany, and public holidays and key sports events for all major countries.

Travel Guide for Western Europe - A comprehensive travel companion to run on your Psion. Information on travel, airlines and car hire, restaurants, opening hours, emergencies and much more, covering all major Western European countries.

World Citizen: Business Almanac - major business and demographic database tool covering over 20 major nations around the world. Economic information, modern history and government, geography and climate, key industries and more.

All packages cost £12.95-£17.95 plus shipping, and will run on the 3a or 3c. Siena versions should also be available by the time you read this.

Several more titles are due for release in the first quarter of 1997, and we will be reviewing the three packages shown here in the next issue of *Palmtop*.

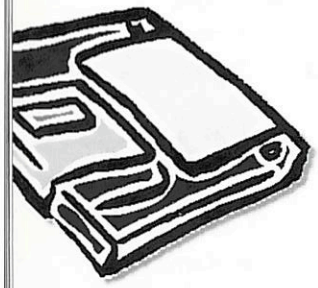
On-Board Info Ltd
tel: (0171) 370 0307
fax: (0171) 370 0870

Zarian Encyclopedia

A UK encyclopedia configured as a Psion DATA file is now available. The database includes scores of entries on a variety of subjects, and costs £26.99 on PC floppy disk, with the possibility of an SSD version in the future. Full details will appear in a review in the next issue of *Palmtop*.

Contact: Andrew Price
16 Lanscombe Park Road
Allestree
Derby DE22 2XL

Shareware Shorts

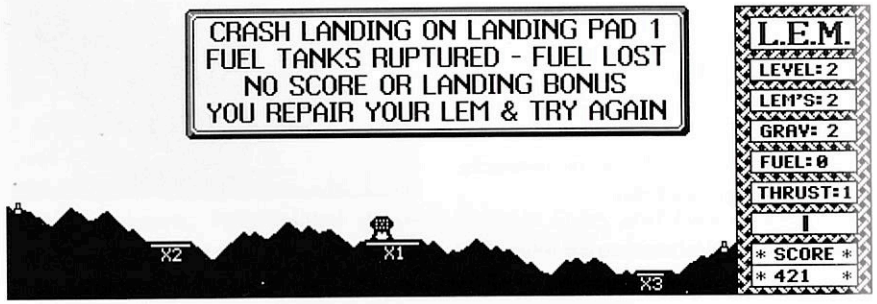


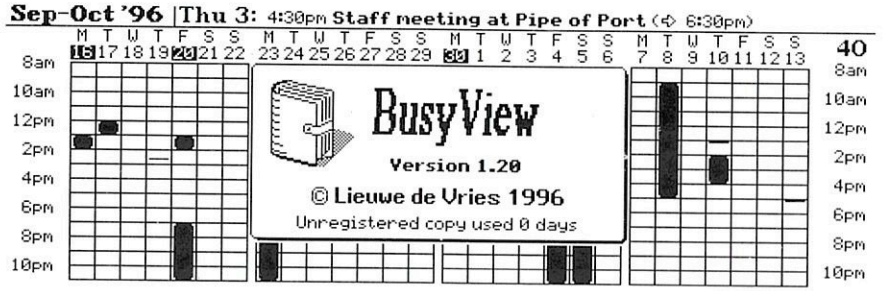
New shareware and free software for the Psion range of machines appears every day. Pete Sipple takes a look at what's new since Issue 9 in our new extended Shareware Shorts....

The New Games have Landed...

Seven new games have recently been released by shareware author Ben Vaughan. The first one to catch my eye was **L.E.M.** (Lunar Entry Module).

Offering smooth graphics, sound effects, 500 landscape sets and varying gravity, your mission is to land the lunar module on a rocky surface. I'm not much of a games fan, but this held my attention for quite a while. It may have something to do with the fact that I remember playing the full screen version many years ago at the local amusement arcade, or it may have been the very sexy female who whispers 'Oh no—try again' when I create a new crater. Beam down **LEM-V1-2.ZIP** (146K) to try it for yourself. The other games available are Casino BlackJack, Robo-Dungeon, Light Cycles, Connect 4, Wolf and PSSST!




Sep-Oct '96 | Thu 3: 4:30pm Staff meeting at Pipe of Port (⇨ 6:30pm)
BusyView
Version 1.20
© Lieuwe de Vries 1996
Unregistered copy used 0 days

(surprise your friends by playing sound effects from your sleeping Psion). All of these programs can be obtained from the author's WWW homepage *http://ourworld.compuserve.com/homepages/B_Vaughan*

Busy Busy Busy!

BusyView claims to be the fastest agenda viewer around. Similar to the new 'Busy' view on the 3c, this application allows you to view your appointments in four week blocks. You can jump to AGENDA, select appointments on any text, and automatically update the view if the Agenda file changes. **BUSYV120.ZIP** (24K)

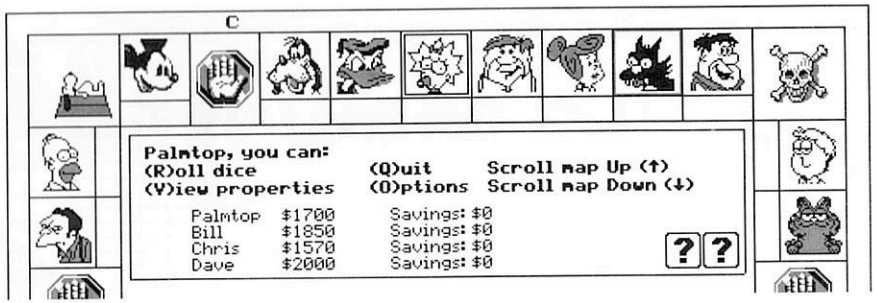
Not quite Monopoly...

Greedy v1.0 is a Monopoly-style game for the Psion. Play against three computer opponents and move around a board decorated with Fred Flintstone, the Simpsons and other famous cartoon characters. Easy to play, lighter than Psion's Monopoly, and best of all, free! Gobble up **GREEDY10.ZIP** (132K)

Sleeper 1.3 from Pelican software is for those lucky enough to have a backlit 3c. Sleeper can turn your light on every time you switch on your 3c on, or engage permanent backlighting at a specific time. Sleeper also functions as a night clock. Before you ask—I haven't tested it... 'cos I haven't got a backlight. Grumble grumble... **SLEEPER.ZIP** (8K)

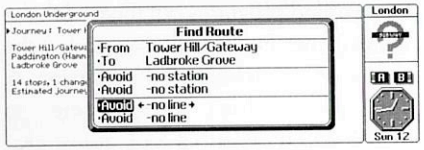
In Issue 9 I mentioned *Mastermind.* It's since transpired that there are two Mastermind programs out there with the same name. Neil Sands has ended the confusion by renaming his version of the classic logic peg game to **M_MIND.ZIP**. Worth a look at just 4K.

Genealogists may be interested to know that as well as kGene, reviewed last issue, another useful utility is available. **Geni** is a genealogical database browser that allows users to carry large amounts of information in a small amount of space. The databases are created from GEDCOM files and are usually half the size of the original GEDCOM. You can't enter any details yourself, but if you



have an existing GEDCOM created on your PC or Mac, then **GENI-111.ZIP** (35K) may be useful.

London travellers may want to take a look at **Subway**, a route planning program. It lacks the visual representation of the London Underground map found in *Tube*, the commercial package, but is small, cheaper and seems accurate. If you find it useful, the author requests that you make a donation to the charity of your choice. **SUBW1A.ZIP** (25K)



Subway

CleanOPL is a tool for OPL programmers. Keywords, procedures, variables and labels in any OPL source file will be given the correct case; you can also experiment with indenting your OPL code. A nifty utility, but remember to backup first! **CLNOPL13.ZIP** (10K)

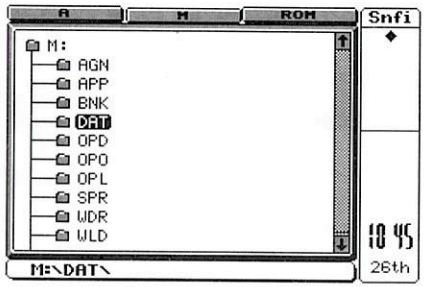
CALC3a, the freeware scientific calculator, has been updated to v1.7. This Casio/Sharp style calculator has approximately 60 mathematical functions, plus an equation evaluator, solver, and an X-Y graphics plotter. **CALC3A.ZIP** (53K)

Version 1.1 of **X3Tree**, the 3a/c file manager is available. Main changes include the setting of file attributes, new menu options, improved error handling and warnings before overwriting files. **X3TREE.ZIP** (26K)

Star gazers may find **Astro97** rather useful. It's a Series 3a AGENDA file containing astronomical information for 1997: including moon phases, meteor showers, eclipses and planetary data. It's free. **ASTRO97.ZIP** (7K)

Updated since last issue...

Mapper-3a/GB v4.7 has just been released. The number of town plans supplied is now 250, and v4.7's big change is a new higher-resolution coastline. **MA44UP47.ZIP** (upgrade), **MAPA47.ZIP**, **MAPB47.ZIP** and **MAPC47.ZIP**.



SnFile 1.1—Siena file management

The contact management system, **Contact Edge** (now at version 4.0) has recently been released as freeware. Look out for **EDGE40.ZIP** (79K)

Convert, the fourth most frequently downloaded program on CompuServe, has reached v6c1. Convert from just about anything to anything else, now with German and French support, clothing tables, all world currencies with ISO codes, auto home currency adjust. The definitive convertor **CON3A.ZIP** (90K)

Two of the main banking packages have been updated. **DPBANK15.ZIP** (61K) has a graphical add-on included and **S3ABANK9.ZIP** (Beta 2 - 257K) has undergone some module changes.

Draw v2.82 has been released, including a faster improved HP printer driver with two types of grey dithering, plus support for PostScript printers. **DRAW282.ZIP** (57K)

JBCIS, the CompuServe offline reader used in conjunction with ReadCIS—updated to v1.2.1a. **JBCIS.ZIP** (49K)

Siena Software...

SnFile v1.1 is a nice file manager for the Siena. It features a fast drawing directory tree, multiple tagging of files across different directories, and the ability to view PIC files. **SNFILE11.ZIP** (24K)

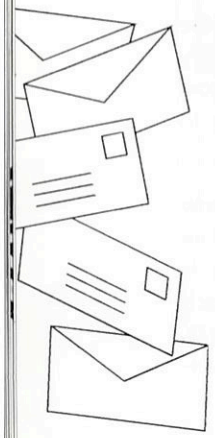
Mapper-Si/GB v1.1 for the Siena is now available, and has the redeeming feature that it has most of the functionality of its bigger brother without taking up much disk space. The ZIP file is only 83K (compared to 400K in total for Mapper-3a's 3 ZIP files) **MAPS11.ZIP**

Steve Litchfield reports that his **Siena Golf 1.0** is proving popular. It's basically *Fairway* without the digital sound and on the smaller screen. Game play is just as good as the 3a version. **SNGOLF10.ZIP** (36K)

A Siena version of the **3T** file manager, less than 10K in size, with a sorted fast display, tagged file operation and directory creation. **3TS_101.ZIP**

Many of the programs listed here can be found at the Palmtop Magazine website: http://members.aol.com/palmtop/

If you can't find a particular piece of software mentioned above, then you may like to take a look at the advertisement on page 105. This gives details of how to purchase a floppy disk containing all the shareware programs featured in this issue!



Readers' Letters

The author of the most interesting letter submitted for issue 11 will win a free leather case or software package from our special collection

PRIZE LETTER - Richard Riley wins a free leather case for his enlightening observations on the use of Psions in schools.

Psion goes to school

Dear Palmtop,

I am 15 years old, I go to boarding school, and I own a Series 3a. Many adult users may be surprised to hear that these little machines are catching on fast with younger people: their convenient size and friendly software makes them ideal for school or college use. As schools start to encourage information technology and as youngsters become increasingly competent with computers, many parents are keen to buy their children a computer on which they can expand their skills and improve their schoolwork. But in practice many parents feel that they cannot, or will not, pay the price of a brand new PC. The solution to this problem, for many people, has been a Psion handheld.

One obvious reason for buying a Psion instead of a PC is the price difference. At less than £300 for a standard model the 3a looks particularly attractive when compared with the latest £1,200 PC. As you will probably want to insure the machine, which is likely to receive a lot of knocks and bumps during its school life, the savings from buying cheaper hardware becomes even greater.

Whether at home or school, the space taken up by a PC leaves little desktop space for other work. My school study has the desk built under a high bunk, so there is no chance of rearranging the room to suit the computer. With a 3a, the only permanent fixture to your desk might be a mains adaptor. In a school environment, another advantage is that the Psion can be kept safe in a small locked box. On the average PC, a case lock or a password cannot prevent the mouse mat or the speakers from being stolen. At school, even excluding the possibility of theft, a desktop PC is vulnerable (these are all true life examples) to pet hamsters, footballs, toothpaste, water fights and even the cleaning lady's Jif. Although the Psion might encounter a fair amount of bombardment too, its ability to hide safely in a box or drawer is bound to afford it a longer working life.

Apart from price difference, one of the major incentives for buying your child a Psion instead of a PC is the 3a's emphasis on *work*. Of course, the PC's primary use is in the office, but its games market is now huge. The temptation to play these games when you should be doing homework is enormous, especially with easy access to your new machine. A few of my colleagues do have PCs at school, and I suspect that no less than 95% of the total computing time is spent gaming. If you see your child's PC as a toy then perhaps you might expect this, but if you forked out £1000+ on the assumption that multimedia is 'oh so educational' you may like to review the situation: although some kids do start to catch on and learn more, one boy in my age group wouldn't even know how to create a shortcut within Windows—after owning his machine for more than a year! There is little incentive for him to find out, either. Usually, there is a class 'techie'/'wiz' (like me) who will happily help out. At least with the 3a, games to match the likes of *Flight Unlimited* or *Command & Conquer* are, thankfully, impossible. While the odd game of *Lander* on the 3a may be entertaining, it certainly couldn't keep you glued to the screen for hours on end.

Ultimately your child will probably want to get the data onto paper in some way, and this can cost almost as much as the 3a itself. If Mum or Dad already have a PC and printer at home, the simplest option is to buy a copy of *PsiWin*. Once set up all the young owner needs to do is plug in the lead, activate the Psion's link option and load the PC software. Of course, this means that a hard copy of the data cannot be obtained until the child gets back home from school, making it impractical for writing notes or essays that must be submitted on the same day. For true portability, a lightweight printer such as the Citizen PN60 is necessary, but at a price of £299+VAT one really pays for the astounding miniaturisation.

Richard Riley
Godalming, Surrey

Acorn links for all!

Dear Palmtop,

Reading the Amiga connection article in issue 9, there is something I really must correct. On page 80, Paul Roberts remarks correctly that the Acorn *A-Link* is far cheaper than the Psion 3-*Link*. He then says that the Acorn product is "very difficult to obtain, as it is generally only

available to schools". That is simply not true! I and many other Acorn users possess *A-Link*s bought from Acorn dealers. Anyone can do the same by looking in *Acorn User* or *Archimedes World* magazines and picking a dealer. A few are:

Acorn Direct (Vector Mktg) - 01933 228953

ICS - 0151 625 1006

Desktop Projects - 0161 474 0778

Davyn - 01924 254800

Beebug - 01727 840303

CJE Micros - 01903 523666

Micro Laser Designs - 01225 833266

Liquid Silicon - 01592 592265

Prices are around £49+VAT including software. As Acorn will sell the software (*PocketFS*) by itself to *3Link* (PsiWin) owners for £10, anyone else isn't paying a lot extra for software they can't use.

John Woodthorpe
Rugby, Warwickshire

Good service from POS

Dear Palmtop,

I have just had my trusty 1Mb 3a upgraded to 2Mb by POS Ltd **(see ad. on page 100 - Ed.)** It was a pleasure and an eye opener. After seeing their ad. in *Palmtop* I called them about the possibility of upgrading. The good news was that my 6 month old 1Mb machine could be upgraded for what I thought was a reasonable fee. Unfortunately my daughter's older 512K 3a could not.

Arrangements were made for me to call in at POS and have the work done while I waited. While doing the upgrade they also changed the battery cable and checked the computer for any other faults.

Having reinstalled my original data, fresh '2Mb' and warranty stickers were applied to the casing and the Psion was handed back. The only thing I had to do was change the date and time and pay the bill.

While on the subject of *Palmtop*, how many readers look at the new issue and then stick it in its binder and forget it? Have you ever taken old copies of *Palmtop* out and reread them? It's surprising how much more you can glean from them as you get to know more about your Psion and can understand parts that you previously missed.

So here are two tips:

Use the ADVERTISEMENTS

Reread those old mags!

John Wellard
Ashford, Kent

The mathematics of CALC

Dear Palmtop,

Just a short note on the Series 3c CALC advanced mode 'error' mentioned in issue 8. Yes—the answer should be 0.01, no—there's not a mathematical error, other than assuming that those 'dirty' floating point numbers act like *reals*. If you put the calculator in *fixed point* format instead of *general* or *scientific*, you get the expected answer.

I call the numbers 'dirty' because they're like piles of dirt: every time you move one you lose some of its dirt, and pick up some more from a different pile. It is arguable whether you SHOULD print 0.01 in this case or not, which may well be why the desktop mode doesn't have this behaviour: they favoured precision over accuracy there.

Mike Meyer
Alameda CA, U.S.A.

Want an upgrade?—Just ask!

Dear Palmtop,

I have noticed that a lot of people are on a bit of a downer due to the fact that there is no trade-in from older Psion machines for newer ones.

Being a 2Mb 3a user I don't think there is enough change in the 3c to warrant a trade-in anyway, but for those of you who have your minds set on getting the 3c there may be light at the end of the tunnel. Here is a little story of how I got my 2Mb 3a machine:

My 512K 3a was 13 months old but still in A-1 condition (although the manual was looking a little worse for wear) at the time the new 2Mb machine was released—what wouldn't I do to have 2Mb of internal RAM?

I decided to call the store from which the 512K machine was purchased to get a bit more info on the new machines. After talking to the manager about the new 2Mb model I asked jokingly if they could do a trade-in with my 512K toward a 2Mb. He replied, 'Can't really do that with it being out of warranty', to which I said 'yeah, but it doesn't look *that* old', and he asked me to bring it in so he could have a look at it.

I took it into the store the next day and explained that 512K is not really enough RAM for heavy use of the SOUND application, and that to add the extra RAM would be too expensive to even consider—he agreed with me. After a little discussion he finally accepted the 512K as a trade-in, but due to the state of the manual he said he could only do the deal if I accepted a trade-in price of £20 below current retail, and to pay the difference between that and the new machine.

10 minutes later I was on my way home with a new 2Mb 3a with full warranty, so there may be hope for others if they just have the nerve to ask!

Andrew Welsh, Hull

A Closer Look...

...at some of the newest and most interesting products available for your Series 3, 3a, 3c and Siena

PsiMail Internet

'Surfing' with a Psion will soon be possible, with the long awaited *PsiMail Internet* package due sometime in March. Psion have kindly supplied us with a pre-release version, and I've spent the last few weeks getting to grips with this powerful suite of applications.

What does it do?

Four key applications are supplied:

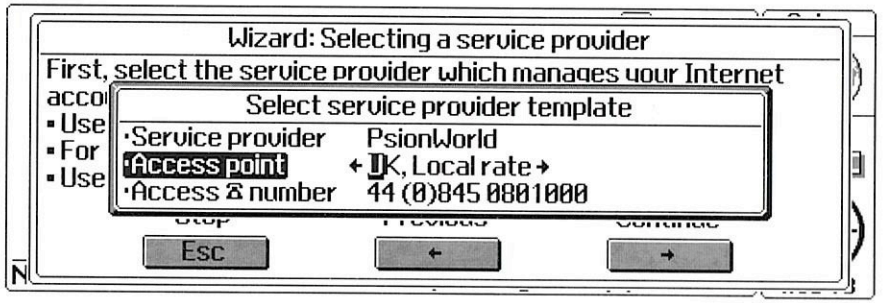
- **Mail** - read, write, send and receive e-mail (using POP3 or SMTP).
- **Web** - browse Internet web pages online (with graphics).
- **Setup** - enter details of your Internet connection, modem type and account details.
- **Tools** - For more advanced users—Ping, Trace, Lookup, Finger & Time.

System requirements

- A Series 3a (512K or above) or 3c.
- A Hayes-compatible modem (supports up to 19,200bps with a 3a, or 57,600bps with a 3c).
- A TCP/IP account with an Internet Service Provider.
- 500Kb of storage for the program files, and an additional 200K of memory when running.

Installing PsiMail

Installation from the supplied 3½" floppy disk via PC was straightforward, as the appropriate files are copied using


Wizard: Selecting a service provider
First, select the service provider which manages your Internet
Select service provider template
·Service provider PsionWorld
·Access point ← UK, Local rate →
·Access ☎ number 44 (0)845 0801000
Esc

Psion's new Windows-based *PsiSetup* installer (previously used with their Monopoly game). If you are installing from a non-PC computer or from a Cyclone drive then you are left out in the cold though, as the documentation makes no mention of how or where to install everything manually (there are over 50 files to install). Once the files have been copied across, you simply add the 'Internet Group' icon to your system screen to complete the installation.

PsiMail Internet is very memory hungry: 512K 3a owners will need to run the applications from an SSD, as will anyone who is already tight on storage space.

Setup

At this point, you need to decide which *service provider* you're going to use to connect to the Internet. If you have an account with an existing provider and they offer a TCP/IP dialup service, then you should be able to use your regular account. I successfully connected using a *Pipex* dialup account with no problems. For this review, I decided to see what Psion's Internet service had to offer, so selected *PsionWorld* as my service provider. *PsionWorld* uses *Sprynet* as the provider, which is effectively *CompuServe*. If you have more than one account, then this is catered for too: simply save your settings and select 'New' from the menu to enter details of other providers.

To get started, it's probably easier to use the built-in 'Setup Wizard': this walks you through the basic setup, asking for details of the service provider, including DNS, protocol (SLIP or PPP) and mail server settings. If you're connecting with *PsionWorld*, then this is done for you.

You are then asked for details of your modem. I used the new Psion Travel Modem (reviewed elsewhere in this issue), but was also able to connect using my US Robotics Sportster 28800.

If you choose to use *PsionWorld* as your service provider then you just connect up to their sign-up service and are automatically asked for your name, address, preferred e-mail address (xxxxx@psimail.net) and credit card details. If this is accepted then you're online straight away.

Three *PsiWorld* account options are provided. Prices are given in US dollars, and *exclude* telephone charges:

- Economy - $4.95 (around £3) per month, including 3 hours online.
- Standard - $9.95 (around £6) per month, including 7 hours online. Extra hours cost $1.95 each.
- Unlimited - $19.95 (around £12) with no usage limit.

With *PsionWorld* the log-on scripts are supplied for you, which means there's nothing further to do. This makes life easy for the novice with no knowledge of Internet jargon and protocols.

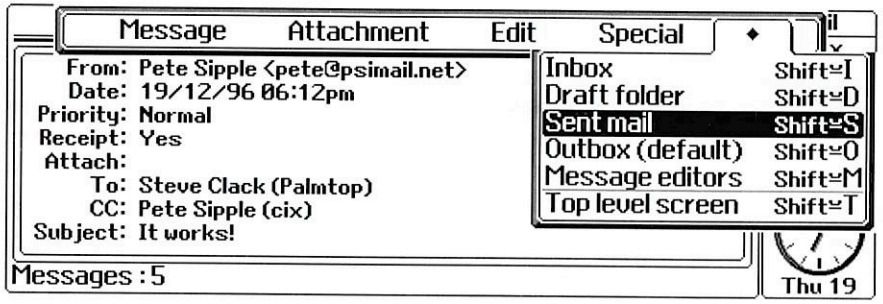
If you're using another provider then you have more work to do. You need to select the 'Connection script' menu option and tell PsiMail what your provider sends during log-on. It was fairly easy to automate my log-on to Pipex, but I simply couldn't get CompuServe to sign on correctly. As you can't see what's happening 'in the background' when a log-on script is running, many users may struggle in this area, and it's hopefully something that Psion will address by including default setup details for the large service providers.

Assuming that the setup has gone well, you're now ready to go online.

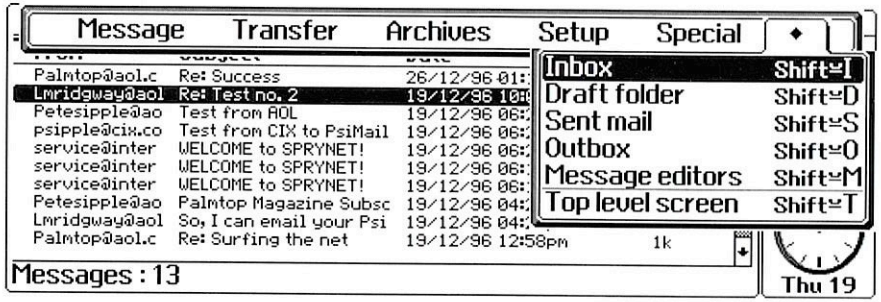
Mail

This is one very impressive and powerful program. Working as a true offline reader everything can be done at your leisure, and you then send and receive your new mail in a batch, thus keeping the online time and connection charges down. Messages that you write are stored in your 'outbox', and can be edited, deleted or moved to a draft area if you want to hold the message. Mail comes with a nifty address book which pops up when you start typing an address and can deal with cc's and binary attachments (MIME or UUencode). If your machine has a spelling checker you can also proof your messages for mistakes.

Sending messages is easy: select 'Transfer Mail', your modem leaps into



Composing electronic mail on your Psion


Message
Transfer
Archives
Setup
Special
Palmtop@aol.c Re: Success 26/12/96 01:
Lmridgway@aol Re: Test no. 2 19/12/96 10:
Petesipple@ao Test from AOL 19/12/96 06:
psipple@cix.co Test from CIX to PsiMail 19/12/96 06:
service@inter WELCOME to SPRYNET! 19/12/96 06:
service@inter WELCOME to SPRYNET! 19/12/96 06:
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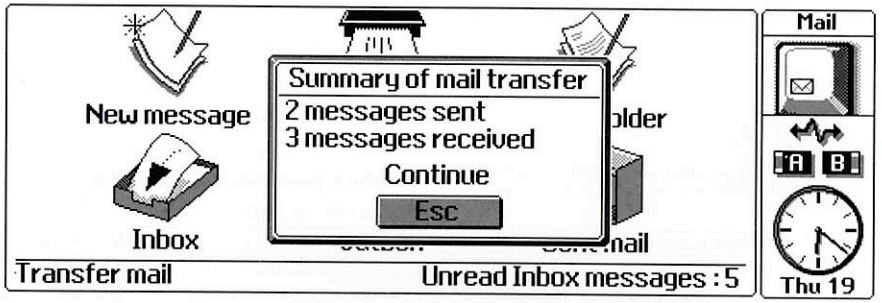
Petesipple@ao Palmtop Magazine Subsc 19/12/96 04:
Lmridgway@aol So, I can email your Psi 19/12/96 04:
Palmtop@aol.c Re: Surfing the net 19/12/96 12:58pm 1k
Inbox Shift+I
Draft folder Shift+D
Sent mail Shift+S
Outbox Shift+O
Message editors Shift+M
Top level screen Shift+T
Messages : 13
Thu 19

—and viewing the contents of your Inbox



A nice graphical interface...

life, your messages are sent, and waiting mail pops into your 'inbox'. Navigating around the program is simplicity itself, and the online help is fairly comprehensive too.

Mail can be printed and archived as required. I had very few problems with Mail, with only one recurring glitch—which was an intermittent inability to send a message if it was a 'reply' rather

It's the *Palmtop* web page—no less!

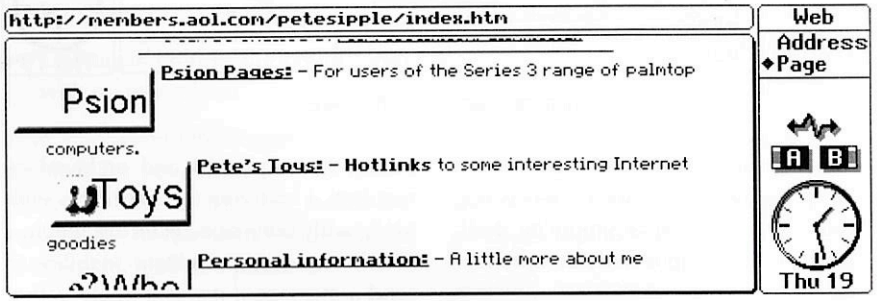
than a new message—which I think resulted in the mail header getting confused.

The Web Browser

Having already tried offline web browsers such as *WebSurf* before, I thought I knew what I could expect from this program, but I was wrong. This is a very easy-to-use browser—it's basic, but very effective. For a start, I hadn't expected to see graphics pop onto my screen, and was pleasantly surprised to find that the *Palmtop* web site logo displayed on screen, as shown above.

The software allows you to make bookmarks of your favourite sites, has keys to go backwards, forwards, or direct to your homepage, and you can cache your pages, enable or disable graphics and follow hotlinks.

The speed was pretty good when using my *Pipex* account, but if using *PsionWorld* as my service provider the whole thing did move a little too slowly for my liking, especially when loading graphics. As you would expect, certain HTML commands didn't work (i.e. *tables* and *mailto*), and some sites fell over halfway through: presumably when encountering *cgi* or *Java* code. Complex graphics presented some problems too,



Psion surfin'

with the poor Psion struggling to dither a 256 colour image down to black, white and grey. Nonetheless, an online browser for the Series 3a/3c is quite an achievement, and pulled quite a crowd with colleagues who gathered round to see my machine in action.

Tools

Several useful tools are also supplied for the more advanced user. You can 'ping' a site to see if it's responding, 'trace' the route to a host, 'lookup' a host for a given DNS, 'finger' a host's users, and synchronise your machine's internal clock with a host.

Problems

As I mentioned earlier the software I reviewed is a pre-release beta version, and there were some problems with it. Hopefully, most of these will be resolved prior to final release.

I had my fair share of glitches. About one in three sessions didn't go smoothly, with abrupt program termination with errors such as 'Exit number 255' and 'out of memory' when attempting to run both Mail and Web together, even with over 500K of available RAM.

Interestingly, I had far fewer problems using my Pipex account than when connecting via *PsionWorld*. As the Sprynet server is US-based, it's possible that *PsionWorld* may be suffering from some of the connection/speed problems familiar to some UK CompuServe users.

One fundamental problem that needs addressing is that of knowing what's going on. Boxes and messages appear regularly to inform you of the status of a transfer, but they're not very accurate. I was receiving messages like 'contacting host' or '45% completed' even with the modem switched off, and there's no easy way of telling whether you're actually online or not. I was also finding that I could connect to the network, but nothing would happen. I'd get a 'connecting' message even though I had already successfully connected. The package is also lacking a 'disconnect' button, which meant that the only way I could guarantee I was offline was to pull out the modem lead—not ideal. Similarly, attempting to start up Mail whilst using Web seemed to result in a 'disconnect' then a 'connect', even though I was happily online already.

Summary

From what I've seen of the beta version, I'm largely impressed—this is potentially a very promising product. There's clearly still some way to go yet, but it's unfair to criticise a beta version. As soon as we see the release version, we will

publish an update in *Palmtop*, mentioning what's been fixed or improved. The draft of the user manual looks good, but does contain some errors and omissions which will hopefully be fixed before release too.

Details of Psion's TCP/IP stack has apparently been made available to developers, so it's likely that we'll see some shareware offerings fairly soon, hopefully including a UseNet news reader so we can follow discussion groups, as well as an FTP program which will handle file downloads.

Thanks to Service Providers Netforce Group plc of Chelmsford, Essex (www.netforce.net) for the use of a Pipex dialup account.

Pete Sipple

InfoBOX

PsiMail Internet will be available from all major Psion dealers on floppy disk only, at £59.95 including VAT. Release is currently expected to be sometime in March, but this may be further delayed.

Psion Travel Modem

I'm now doing something I've always wanted—writing an article from some exotic location. While Britain is in the grip of a cold snap, I'm fortunate enough to be in Orlando, Florida, where the current temperature is in the eighties. This article will be e-mailed to *Palmtop*'s office via *PsiMail Internet*, and Psion's new Travel Modem.

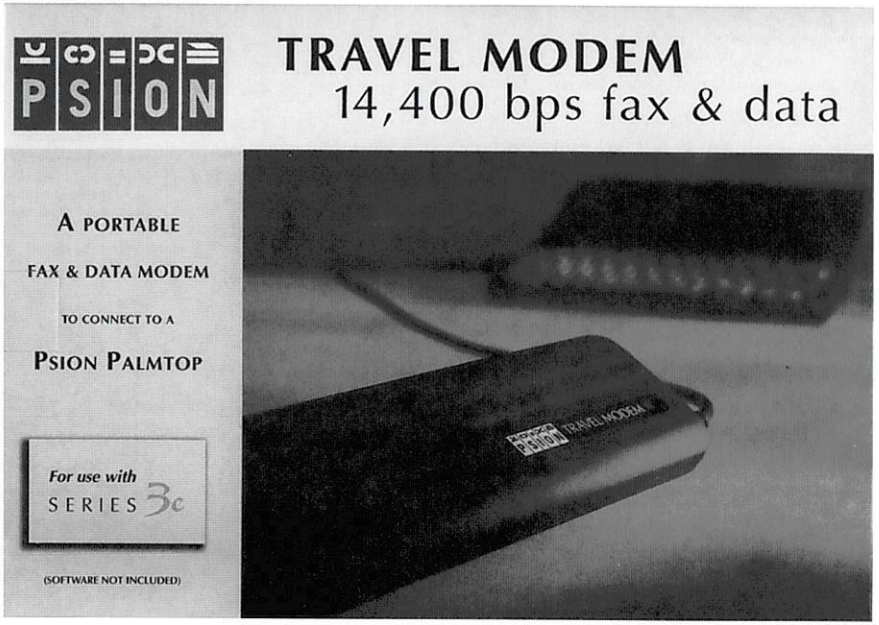
At 165mm x 40mm x 25mm, the Travel Modem is the same length and depth as the 3c, a little over half as wide and comfortably lightweight. It's manufactured in the UK by Psion's modem company, Dacom, looks good and is well constructed. The case is moulded in Psion grey with the Series 3/3a 'feel' rather than the rubbery texture of the 3c case. The modem has a short lead with a 15-pin (Honda) connector protruding from the right, with a long flying lead on the left, terminated in a standard phone connector. There's a small speaker on board, and a green LED to indicate the presence of AC power. The Travel Modem will *not* work with the Series 3 or 3a machines, which is a pity.

The unit is powered by either two AA sized batteries, the standard Psion mains adaptor or a rechargeable pack which is mentioned in the manual. Power consumption is obviously crucial for a portable unit such as this, and I was a little disappointed in the way Psion have addressed this. Firstly, when plugged into the mains, the modem doesn't seem to power the Psion or vice versa. For battery independence it therefore appears that *two* AC adaptors are needed. Also, there's no obvious way to check the state of the modem's batteries. After a couple of hours use the speaker was noticeably quieter, and I started to get some unreliable connections. I was hoping that the battery state may be reported back to the 3c, allowing a software 'low battery' warning, or at the very least a low-battery bleep—but no.

The modem also lacks any status lights, so you can't tell whether you're connected or not, or whether data is being sent/received. The speaker allows you to hear the dial tone, dialling, and the initial 'handshake', but then you're on your own. There are no buttons on the modem, so the only way to ensure that the line has been dropped is to physically disconnect it from your 3c, or to switch the 3c off.

A quick word of warning on the subject of batteries. In my experience, most AA battery holders have two connectors: a spring which makes contact with the base of the battery, and a 'blob' for the top. The Travel Modem has two batteries, and therefore two 'blobs' and two springs, but one of the springs goes to the *plus* side of a battery, *not* to the minus. Unless you actually check the polarity marks inside the holder it is very easy to insert the batteries incorrectly, causing possible damage to the modem. If you decide to buy a Travel Modem, just take time to double-check.

Being designed to work specifically with the 3c, the modem has a top transfer



speed of 14,400bps with v32bis and V.43bis, although the manual is a little confused over the top speed of fax send/receive. Page 4 quotes 14,400bps, while page 31 states 9,600bps. The Travel Modem is Group 3 compatible.

Unlike the older *3Fax* modem, potential purchasers should be aware that the Travel Modem does not come with any fax software. This functionality will be provided by Psion's *PsiFax* software, which is due for release in the near future. As I was keen to test out the Travel Modem's fax capabilities I tried version 1.4 of *Faxit*, the shareware fax software (as used with the Microfax Fax Modem reviewed in Issue 8). I couldn't get Faxit to talk to the modem, and after contacting the software's author it was agreed that the inability to connect may be due to changes in the 3c's serial port or the *PsiWin* lead. The author is hopeful that once he is able to lay his hands on a Travel Modem he will be able to make the necessary changes, making Faxit an excellent alternative to Psion's own software.

If you don't intend to fax from your Travel Modem then you'll probably want to send and receive e-mail or connect to the Internet, which makes *PsiMail Internet* the ideal companion software. The two worked well together under test, although the inaccurate status reporting of the *PsiMail* beta release coupled with the lack of feedback from the Travel Modem unfortunately leaves you a little in the dark.

In general this is a reasonable product, but I found it partially disappointing. For your money you get the modem, a 32 page manual which mostly details the standard Hayes command set, and the cables. The lack of any fax/e-mail software, the battery concerns, and more importantly the lack of a status light may cause some mobile users to think twice.

Pete Sipple

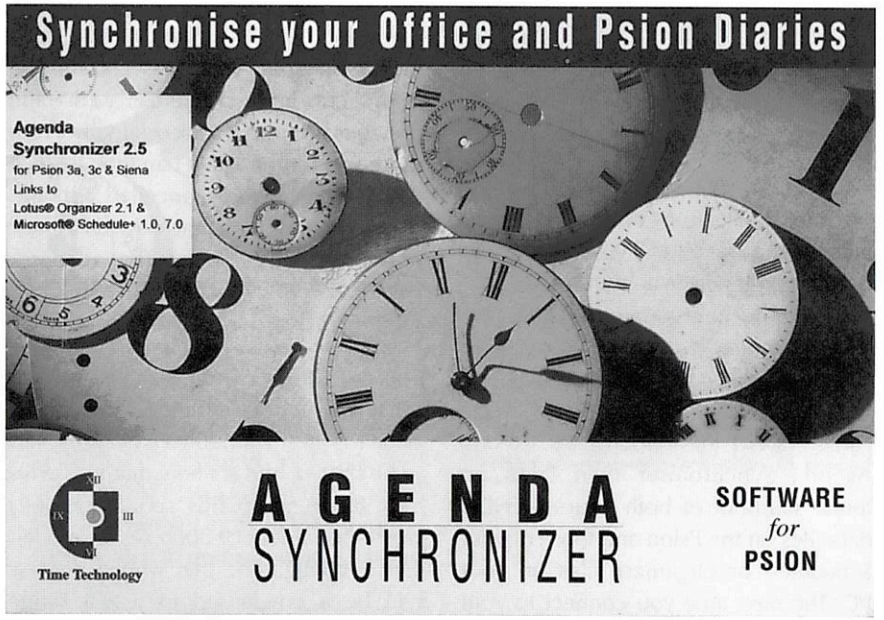
InfoBOX

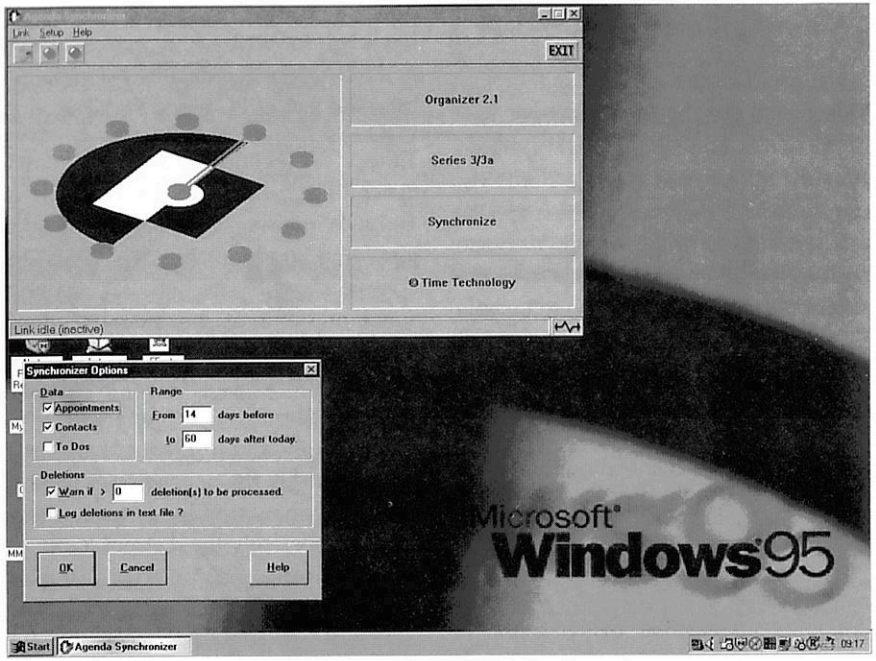
The Psion Travel Modem is available from all major Psion dealers at £199.95 including VAT.

Psion Agenda Synchroniser

Thanks to incompatible file formats used by palmtop computers and PC-based Personal Information Managers or PIMs, users tend to use one or the other to manage their schedules, when of course the best solution would be to have the same data stored on both and to be able to update or synchronise both sets of data. Using both sorts of computer to hold PIM data makes a lot of sense, especially for staff that don't spend their entire day in the office and don't want the bother of lugging a notebook around with them. A synchroniser is essential if only to avoid the pointless re-keying of appointments or the chance of a missed appointment. Agenda Synchroniser is one of a number of PC packages intended to bridge the gap between AGENDA data stored in the Psion palmtops and that of PC-based PIMs.

Time Technology's Agenda Synchroniser, marketed by Psion, is a 16-bit Windows 3.1 utility (but works just fine under Windows 95). In common with its rivals, Agenda Synchroniser is at the mercy of third parties when it comes to data file formats. Both Organizer and Schedule+ 7.0 are about to be upgraded (to *Organizer 97* and to *Outlook*) and yes, you guessed it, the new versions feature completely new data file formats which won't work with the current crop of synchronisers. So, if you intend upgrading to the latest versions of these packages you might have to wait a bit





Agenda Synchroniser doing its stuff...

while Agenda Synchroniser plays file format 'catch-up'.

This is a software-only product so you'll also need the appropriate *3Link* (*PsiWin*) serial cable to hook your Series 3a/3c/Siena to your PC's serial port. Installing Agenda Synchroniser on your PC takes but a few minutes and after specifying the locations of your PIM data files, you connect your Psion to a COM port on the PC with the *3Link* cable and set the Remote Link to 'on'. Agenda Synchroniser then takes an initial snapshot of both your AGENDA data files on the Psion and those of your Schedule+ or Organizer files on your PC. The next time you connect to your Psion, Agenda Synchroniser compares both current schedules with the previous versions it took originally. From these two sets of data it can then deduce the new, revised or cancelled appointments. It then writes the new data back to both PC and Psion data files as appropriate. A series of coloured bars chart the progress of the updating process.

The task of synchronising doesn't take long, a couple of minutes, tops—it just depends on the amount of data that has to be shifted, and it's here that the Series 3c's faster 57,600bps serial port tells over the older 19,200bps 3a model. Once configured, the whole process can be a condensed to just a single mouse click. Sadly the on-line help is pretty poor, as are the cryptic error messages, which are seemingly aimed at the programmers that wrote it rather than the poor old end-user!

Conflict resolution is fairly crude—when Agenda Synchonizer comes across the inevitable appointment clash, both appointments are entered in both Agenda and Schedule+ and a log file is then displayed which lists the conflicting appointments, but there's no opportunity to manually intervene during the synchronisation. Note that the feature set of the PC PIMs and AGENDA on the Psion aren't precisely the same, so some Organizer features aren't found in AGENDA, but by and large the entries are faithfully mirrored—alarmed appointments are well handled as are prioritised to-do lists. On the whole, Agenda Synchroniser does it's job well, despite a few rough edges.

Roger Gann

InfoBOX

Psion Agenda Synchroniser is available from all major Psion dealers at £39.95 including VAT for a version that works with *either* Lotus Organiser or Schedule+, and £59.95 for a version that works with both.

Errors in issue 9

Due to a problem (as yet unidentified) with our film bureau, there were some pagination errors in issue 9 of *Palmtop* which were not present in our original document. These resulted in a few 'widows and orphans' appearing (odd lines at the start and end of pages), and a few other things. Here is a list of them:

1. **The 'Palmtop News' heading on page 4 is in the wrong typeface.**
2. **The 'Continued on the next page' at the top of page 13 refers to the SAME page.**
3. **Page 44 should end in the words 'this area'.**
4. **The 'ENDP' below the classified ad on page 66 belongs on page 65.**

We'd like to apologise for these blemishes to the last issue, and assure our readers that every care is taken to ensure that errors like this do not creep into the magazine.

Siena SSD Drive

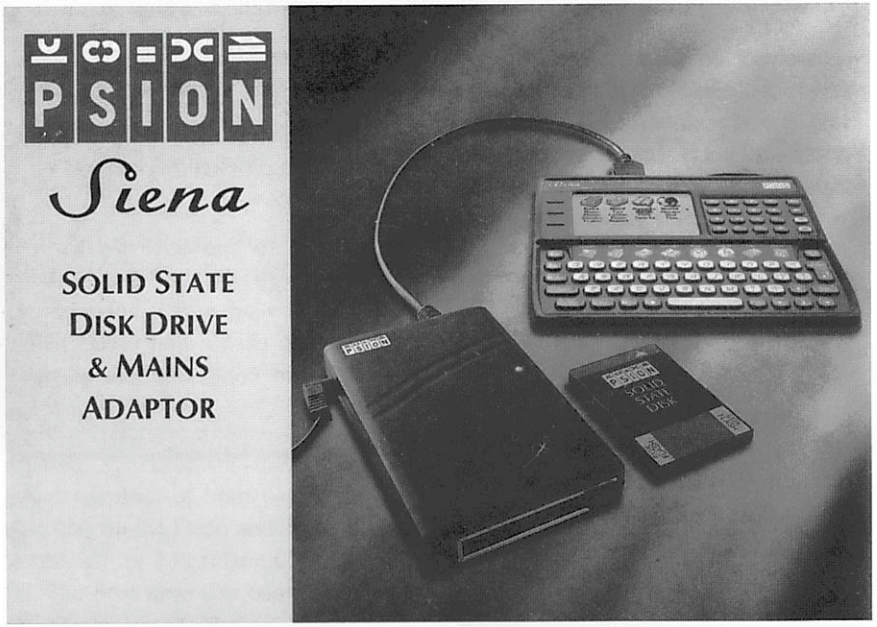
The Siena SSD Drive will be a welcome appearance for Siena owners who have no other means of backing up their data.

The £79.95 package consists of the drive itself, a standard Psion mains adaptor and a small multi-lingual manual.

The drive measures 7cm by 12cm by 1.5cm and weighs just a few grams. There is a 40cm long umbilical cord for connection to the Siena with the new 3c/Siena 15-pin connector on the end. This has become known as the 'Honda Connector' among Psion users, because the ones used on the *PsiWin* cable are made by Honda, but the one on the review model of the SSD drive was labelled 'SC' and is of a slightly different style. There is also a through connector so the serial port can still be used while the drive is connected, a coaxial connector for the mains adaptor, and a two-colour LED.

The SSD is inserted into the front of the drive and a small button on the right of the aperture is used to eject SSDs. The case is made from smooth black plastic which doesn't really match the Siena casing, although it has a ribbed stripe across the top, similar to the Siena case.

Internally the device just contains a power converter to generate the correct voltages for powering the Siena and for writing to flash SSDs.



Installation is very easy: just a matter of plugging the drive cable into the Siena and then attaching the mains adaptor. If all is well the LED will turn green and the 'Battery Info' menu item on the Siena will report that external power is applied.

Inserting an SSD simply involves pushing it into the slot in the front of the drive. This process is a two-handed operation since it involves using a fair amount of force, and the SSD doesn't latch until it is completely flush with the front of the drive. I suspect that the SSD socket may be the same as the one used on Psion's PC-card SSD drive, where the weight of the PC makes this operation much easier.

The Siena detects when an SSD is inserted or removed and updates the menu lists with any new files present on the SSD, just like the 3a/3c. Whenever the Siena is using the SSD (which becomes the 'A' drive) the power LED turns orange—a neat touch.

I had a great deal of trouble with the power supply provided with the review model, which kept disconnecting itself while I was trying to use the drive. This is a potentially serious problem since unlike the 3a/3c there are no batteries to provide power, and the manual warns in several places not to remove the mains adaptor while writing to flash SSDs. Although this was a standard mains adaptor, it was made in China rather than the UK (like all the previous ones I have seen), and had a slightly different case style. The problem appeared to be caused by the connector, which was a millimetre or so shorter than on the UK version and consequently didn't lock properly into the socket. I tried using this adaptor on my 3a with the same result and, as expected, the SSD drive worked fine with the adaptor *from* my 3a. Anyone about to buy a mains adaptor for their Psion may want to check this before handing over their cash, especially since the better fitting plug has always been given as the justification for buying a Psion adaptor rather than the cheaper generic variety.

So how useful is this device? It depends a great deal on your circumstances: if you don't have a PC or you need to leave your Siena turned on all day then you will probably find it indispensable. If not, then it is of limited use since most Siena-specific software will be supplied on floppy disks. The big disappointment for me is that the drive can only be used on mains power. It is small enough and light enough to be easily carried around for occasional use of programs too big to fit on the Siena's internal drive, but carrying a mains adaptor and finding a power socket is a different matter! Many of the SSD-based 3a/3c programs I tried worked reasonably well—if only Psion had provided a virtual screen with a button to select between the two halves, everything would work perfectly. I tried the *Spell checker and Thesaurus* SSD and it worked fine by itself, and even installed the Spell Check and Thesaurus options under the WORD menu, but unfortunately neither of these worked.

Autoroute Express works well except for a few 'too wide' errors from some of the menus—the map and route views adjust very well to the smaller display. This would be a nice application for an SSD drive that didn't require mains power.

Overall, the SSD Drive is well made and while a little pricey it is not excessively so when you consider that the mains adaptor alone costs £15.

Martin Roberts

InfoBOX

The Siena SSD drive will shortly be available from all major Psion dealers at £79.95 including VAT.

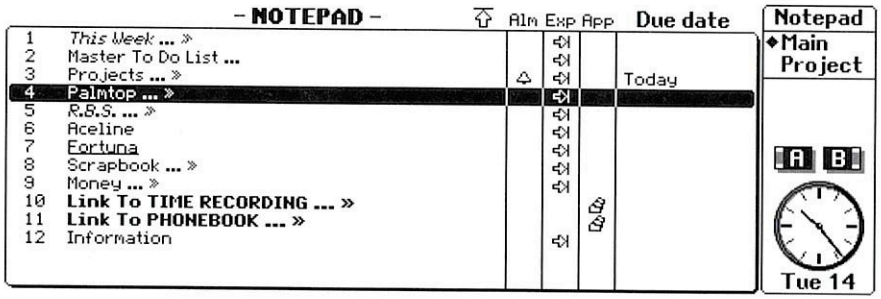
Notepad Deluxe

Notepad is an amazing product that has already been discussed in depth in *Palmtop* (primarily in Issue 5). It's both a tricky product to review, and a difficult package to pigeonhole into a particular category. The breadth and depth of its features give it the capability to be many things to many people, and if you want to get a better idea of the many things it can do then you may like to look in issue 5.

We're giving Notepad some coverage again in this issue as it has just changed from being a shareware product to a commercially published one, released by Purple Software, so it will now attract much more widespread attention than before.

I've been using the product extensively since I purchased it a few months back, and I'm continually finding new things it can do. I've been following a thread of discussion about Notepad on CompuServe recently, and I've been astonished at the wide range of uses it is being put to. These seem to cover everything from complex project management to simple to-do list handling. This is a testimony to its ease of use, flexibility and the way it seems to inspire people to set it up in different ways.

Notepad Deluxe is made up from two main parts, plus a number of extras. The main work is carried out in the Notepad view. At its simplest, Notepad is an



The main view of Notepad showing all the top level notes

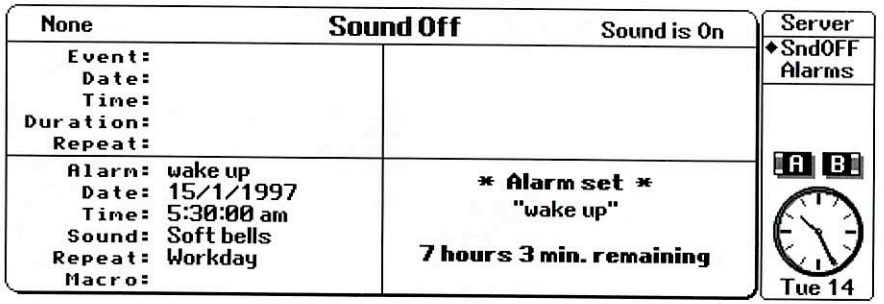
outliner or list manager. New notes can be expanded to include other notes, or provide hot links to data stored in separate WORD files, spreadsheets, database files, and even pictures. Notes can

Quick links to other applications

consist of text, further expansions to other notepads, and individual notes can be assigned priorities, dates and styles such as bold, italic and underlined. This flexibility and linking of data is a core part of Notepad's strength.

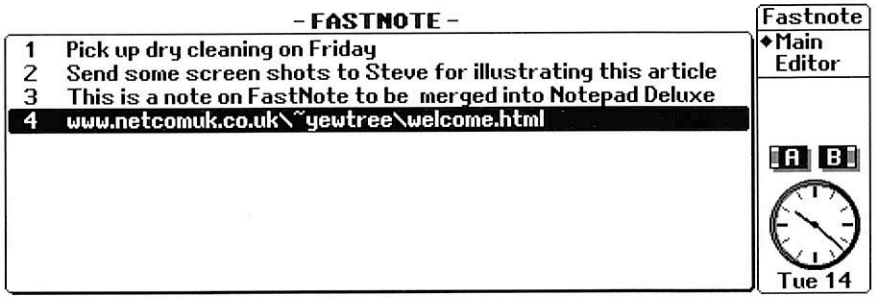
The second part of Notepad is its very powerful built-in *Server* application. This is essentially a very sophisticated alarm handler that can also be used to schedule non-alarm events such as the launching of other programs.

If you assign a time to a note (it can be a due date or a start date) it can then be viewed in the 'project' window, which shows a chronological list of actions similar to a diary. Once your note has been assigned a time you can add alarm settings, then the note entry appears in the accompanying *Server* application. Server allows alarms to be kicked off even when Notepad isn't running. The impressive thing here is the

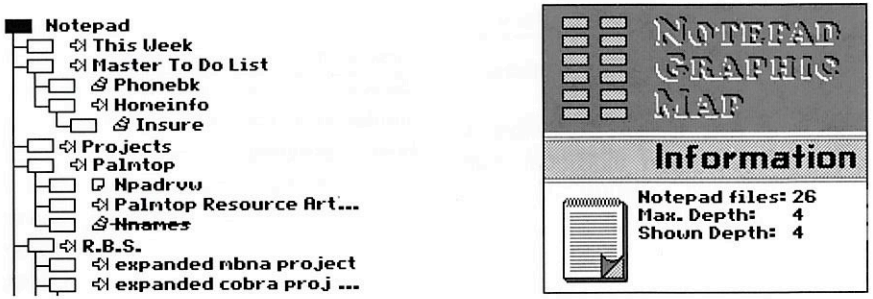


This is the Server showing a 'wake up call' for the reviewer.

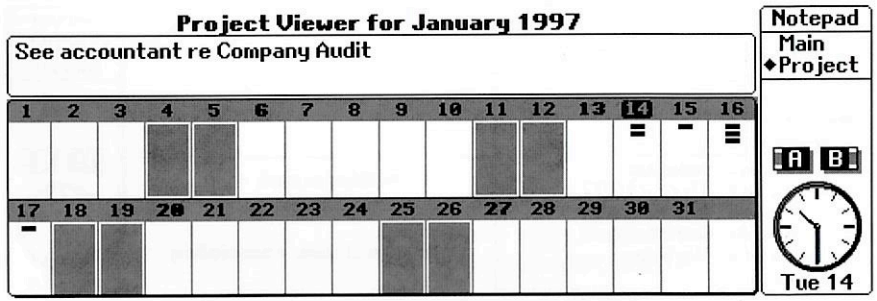
amount of control you can have over an alarm: you can turn alarm sounds off either manually or at preset times, in my case to avoid embarrassment on the London Underground system as my pocket bursts into a peel of bells. The server can be used to sound an alarm or initiate another action like starting a plug-in program (see sidebar), to move all completed tasks from Notepad to the AGENDA, or set up a list of daily events in your to-do list by firing off a macro from *MacSys* (see *Palmtop* issue 3) at a particular time. This enables you to set


- FASTNOTE -
1 Pick up dry cleaning on Friday
2 Send some screen shots to Steve for illustrating this article
3 This is a note on FastNote to be merged into Notepad Deluxe
4 www.netcomuk.co.uk\~yewtree\welcome.html
Fastnote
♦Main
Editor
A B
Tue 14

FastNote is like the 3c Jotter, allowing quick text entry



The Map View shows your Notepad layout graphically


Project Viewer for January 1997
See accountant re Company Audit
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16
17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31
Notepad
Main
♦Project
A B
Tue 14

The Project view shows the date element of each note

up timed processes to take the drudgery out of running specific events on your Psion—very nifty!

In this one program you can do so much that it can quickly become the main application on your Psion: on mine it has replaced the built-in to-do lists, is used in place of the Psion's database for 'fuzzy' data items that don't really fit a standard database field structure (but ones that you still want to find under a given heading), the alarm functions, and even the 3c JOTTER utility by using the free 'FastNote' add-on. FastNote is similar to JOTTER (see the Psion 3c review in issue 8), but has the advantage that the contents can easily be merged into your Notepad data structure.

One of the main features to be added since the last review in *Palmtop* is a graphical representation called the Map View. This shows a hierarchical 'tree' of all notepads and provides a useful overview of your work. It can also be used to navigate through your notes, and will launch a note just by moving the highlight to the notepad you want and pressing the <Enter> key.

The Project Viewer is still useful even if you don't use Notepad as a 'Project Manager', as it can show at a glance the dates associated with all of your Notepad entries, and it has some comprehensive printing and archiving options. One feature that I am particularly delighted with is the export to *NetManage Ecco* software, which I use on my PC.

Plug-ins?

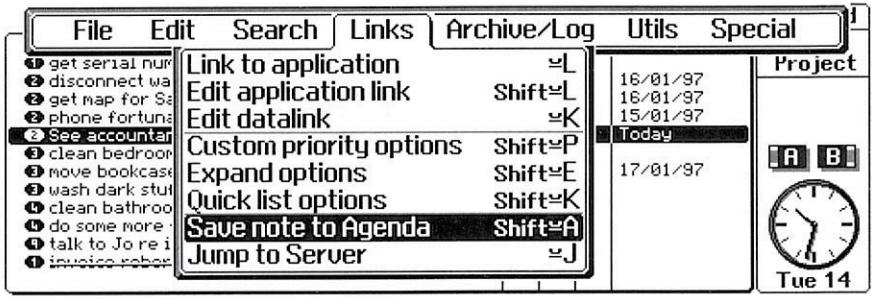
Notepad Deluxe can be significantly expanded by the use of plug-ins. These are small programs written in OPL to add extra features. A number of plug-ins are available from Pelican Software's own World Wide Web page (*http://pelicansoft.com/*) and from the PALMTOP forum on CompuServe. The program's author, Mark Esposito, also makes the format for plug-ins freely available on the web page and actively encourages their creation. I have two which I find especially useful:

a) LIST - which copies the notepad hierarchy to a DBF database file.

b) MERGFAST - which merges data held in FASTNOTE (see below) into the appropriate notepad.

Fastnote?

A useful addition to Notepad Deluxe. Available free from the above sources. This is a JOTTER-like application which allows for quick data entry. Entries can be viewed and sorted, and with the MERGFAST plug-in can be incorporated into your chosen notepad structure.



All functions are logically laid out on the drop down menus

So what has changed in the conversion from shareware to packaged commercial software? It has mainly been a case of tidying up the user interface commands to fall in line with existing applications, but the manual has also been rewritten with lots of screen shots and a more explanatory style.

Although the manual is good at explaining the features of the package it doesn't offer much advice on how to get the best from it, and doesn't work through any sample setups to help new users get to grips with Notepad. I would like to see the provision of an online manual built into Notepad Deluxe, as this could be used to demonstrate some of the ways in which it can be used. Lots of programs use this technique and it can help to jump start beginners on the learning curve.

Paul Wilson

InfoBOX

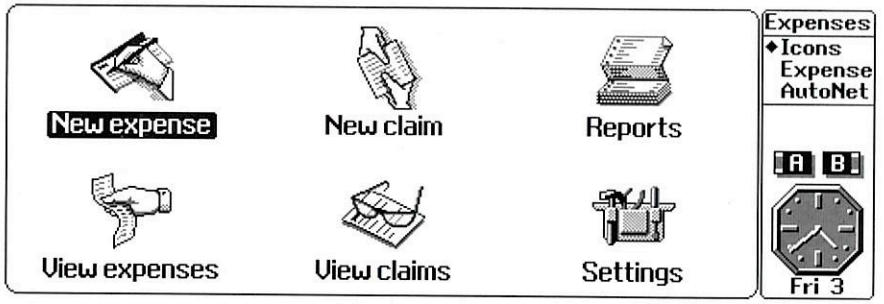
Notepad Deluxe is available from all major Psion dealers at £59.95 including VAT.

Expense Tracker

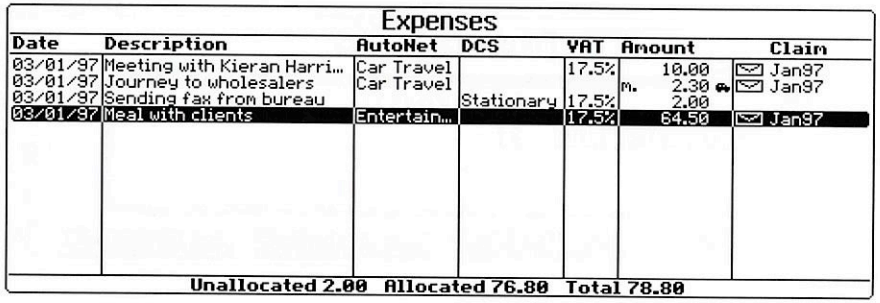
For most businesspeople, keeping track of money they've spent on things like travel and corporate entertainment is a key part of their job. Now it's true that you can get by using nothing more than the spreadsheet, or even just a simple list in WORD. This is perhaps the most appropriate method for lightweight needs, but what if you have dozens of expenses to keep track of? In response to this perceived need Psion have released *Expense Tracker* which costs a mere £29.95 and comes supplied on a single 3½" floppy disk.

The software consists of two programs: the 'Tracker' application which runs on the Psion and takes up 61K of disk space, and a reporting application which runs under Windows on a PC. Expense information is tracked on the Psion and can then be copied across to the PC and laid out into a report which can then be passed across to your accounts department.

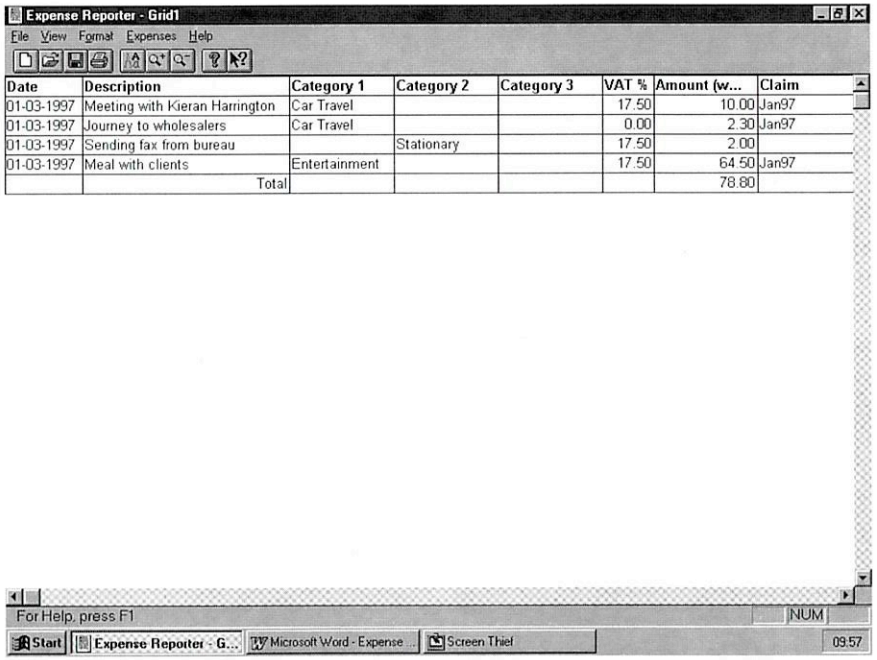
The tracker software on the Psion proved easy to get to grips with, despite the fact that this was a beta version and no documentation was supplied. The first step is to configure the software to suit your own working habits. This involves the creation of different



Expense Tracker's friendly looking main screen

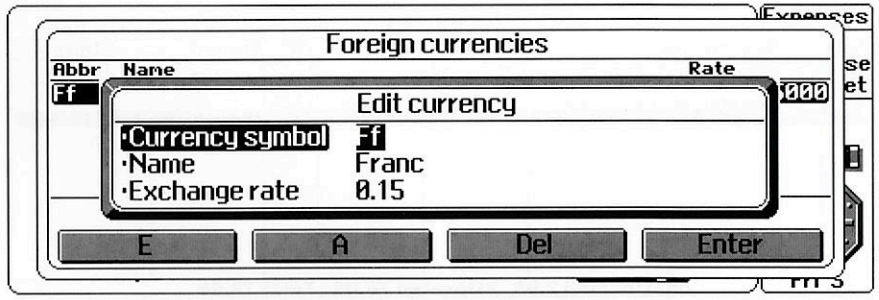

Expenses
Date Description AutoNet DCS VAT Amount Claim
03/01/97 Meeting with Kieran Harri... Car Travel 17.5% 10.00 Jan97
03/01/97 Journey to wholesalers Car Travel m. 2.30 Jan97
03/01/97 Sending fax from bureau Stationary 17.5% 2.00
03/01/97 Meal with clients Entertain... 17.5% 64.50 Jan97
Unallocated 2.00 Allocated 76.80 Total 78.80

Viewing a list of expenses


Expense Reporter - Grid1
File View Format Expenses Help
Date | Description | Category 1 | Category 2 | Category 3 | VAT % | Amount (w... | Claim
01-03-1997 | Meeting with Kieran Harrington | Car Travel | | | 17.50 | 10.00 | Jan97
01-03-1997 | Journey to wholesalers | Car Travel | | | 0.00 | 2.30 | Jan97
01-03-1997 | Sending fax from bureau | | Stationary | | 17.50 | 2.00 |
01-03-1997 | Meal with clients | Entertainment | | | 17.50 | 64.50 | Jan97
Total | | | | | | 78.80 |
For Help, press F1
NUM
Start
Expense Reporter - G...
Microsoft Word - Expense ...
Screen Thief
09:57

Running the Expense Reporter under Windows

expense categories: you can have up to three different groups of expense types and these can be named so that they related to different projects or clients. Beneath each of these types you can then create different categories of expense such as accommodation, mobile phone charges and entertainment. The software can also be setup to deal with car travel costs where you specify the rate per mile that you receive from your company. Foreign currencies



are also supported so that when you enter an expense in something other than £Sterling the value is automatically converted based on the exchange rate you've specified in the software. This might be a little too simplistic for some users, as the actual exchange rate in operation can vary depending on how you paid for the expense. For example, if you paid for something in Francs after you have cashed a travellers cheque then this would be at one rate, whilst a credit card payment would be based on a slightly different rate, so there's a danger that you'll claim either too much or not enough.

The process of entering new expenses is simple enough: just fill in the dialog box and then select the category for each expense. The entries are then displayed in a grid view on screen with four different zoom sizes. The final stage is to then allocate the entries to a specifically named expenses claim form, and that's all there is to it.

The diamond key lets you cycle quickly between views of claims and expenses and either of these can be printed off directly from the Psion. However, because long descriptions are truncated in the printout this doesn't work too well in practice. Fortunately, you can save the screen information in a range of formats: delimited text, spreadsheet DIF and Quicken QIF, so you can move the information across to your PC. Alternatively, you can also open up a delimited text version in WORD. You can then adjust the tab settings and the like and print direct onto company expenses forms once you've got the layout adjusted correctly.

An expenses file can also be copied across to the PC and then displayed within the Expense Reporter application. Here you can include or exclude specific entries and adjust the layout to fit pre-printed company claim sheets.

Given the surprisingly low price, Expense Tracker is a neat program. It's easy to use and offers plenty of flexibility, and the PC-based reporter makes the process of submitting your claims an absolute breeze.

Mark Houghton

InfoBOX

Expense Tracker should be available in February from all major Psion dealers on floppy disk at £29.95 inc. VAT.

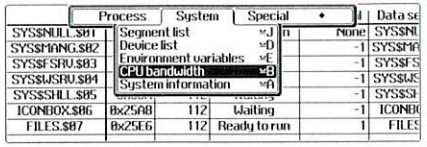
Toolkit 2

Hot off the press, four new programs from Purple Software form ToolKit 2, supplied on either 3½" disk or SSD. If you purchase it on floppy disk you can install the software straight from a PC to your Psion using the new Windows-based PSISETUP program, or you can copy the files manually into the appropriate directories.

SysInfo

This is a seriously powerful and slightly scary application. With SysInfo you can dissect a running application to see exactly what it's doing, how much memory it's taking, where it lives in the Psion's RAM, and what device drivers are being utilised. SysInfo is well beyond the scope of most Psion users, and will only be of use to serious programmers.

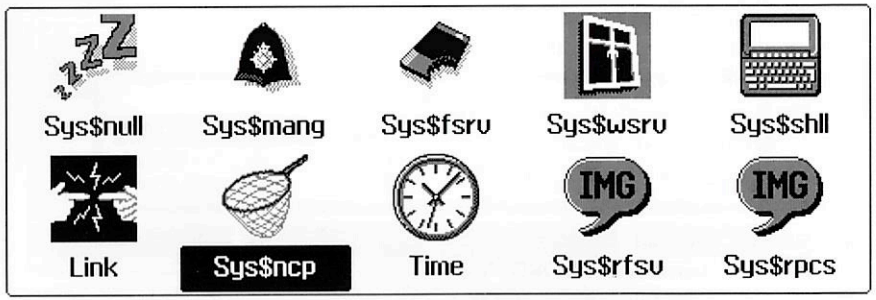
If you understand peeks, heaps and stacks, then you'll find just about every feature you'll ever need. You can check the state of the I/O processes, wait handlers, see the ID of the running process, its priority, status (ready to run, current, waiting or suspended), memory addresses, segment size, heap cell allocation, plus start and end cell addresses.



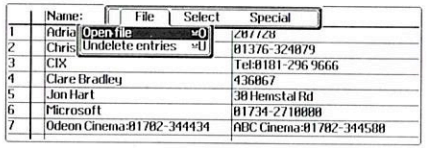
You can view a map of the first 512K of RAM to see what memory's being allocated to where, find out the available system RAM, ROM and OS version, and take a peek at the CPU bandwidth—helpful if you suspect an application is dragging down your overall speed.

FileView

Viewing large text files on a Psion has always been difficult, due to the 40K file size limitation of Psion's WORD application. FileView overcomes this limit, by allowing files of up to 65,000 lines to be displayed. No formatting or printing options are available, just find and zoom, but you can select blocks of text and 'bring' them into WORD if required. Binary files can be viewed too, but with a size limit of 512K.



SysInfo's Icon view - instant access to all running processes



Restoring a deleted Data entry

FileView's other purpose is to recover accidentally deleted records from DATA files. Just open up a .DBF file and you're presented with a list of deletions which you can quickly restore.

IconBox

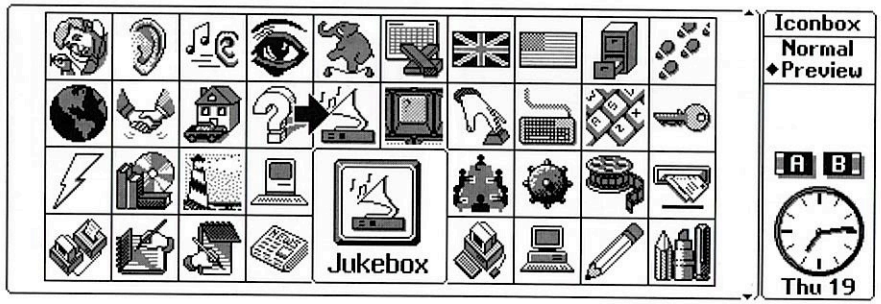
This little utility (previously available as shareware) allows you to customise your system screen by selecting alternative application icons. To add a new icon you select one from a choice of over 130 pre-drawn icons contained in the two files supplied, chose a border and style, save the icon and let the manual walk you through the process of changing your icons.

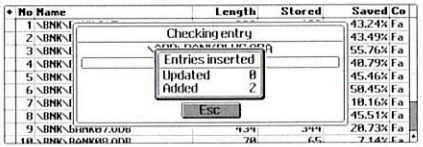
You can only change the icons for file-related applications, so you can't change TIME or CALC.

DataSafe

Users who are tight on space and regularly copy files to and from their machines, or anyone who takes backups seriously will find this part of the toolkit invaluable. Flexible and easy to use, DataSafe lets you select any combination of files or directories and archive them all into a single file. The archive can be compressed to save space and password protected for security. The archive file can also be spanned across more than one disk, allowing you to backup lots of data across several SSDs.

There is a limit of 1024 entries per archive, which shouldn't trouble most users, with the file size only being limited by available space. Archive flags can be set, data can be verified as it's being written to the file, and a





Creating an archive with DataSafe

checksum can be applied for extra peace of mind. DataSafe also compresses data as it archives, so you can typically squeeze 1Mb of files into around 500K. The compression can be set to favour either archiving speed or minimum file size.

All in all, four very polished packages, but I can't help feeling that this new toolkit will only be of interest to a select few Psion users. IconBox is a little lightweight, FileView has its uses but is a bit limited, SysInfo is an excellent tool for the serious coder, which leaves DataSafe as probably the most useful general tool. Compared with Toolkit 1's file manager, conversion package and picture viewer, Toolkit 2 perhaps lacks the mass appeal, but is still up to Purple's usual high standards.

Toolkit 2 comes with a well-produced 40 page manual and online help.

Pete Sipple

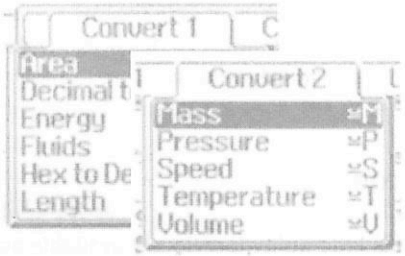
InfoBOX

Toolkit 2 is available from all major Psion dealers at £39.95 inc. VAT on floppy disk, or £49.95 on SSD.

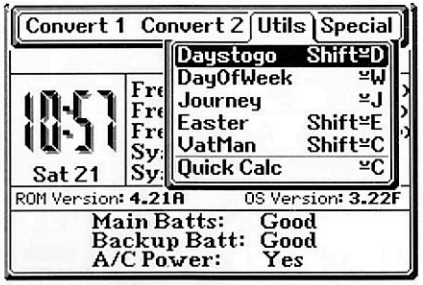
Just What I Need

Phil Spencer, author of *TimeMan* and *PassAgn* has come up with another incredibly useful little utility—'Just What I Need'.

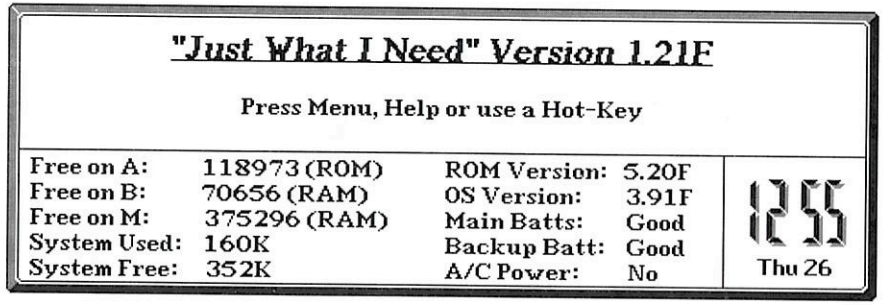
It's only 19K in size, but there's a heck of a lot packed inside: including status information about your machine, several calculation routines and a host of conversion options. The program is small and can run in the background, and be popped up at any time using a hotkey (<Control><J> by default).



Primarily, 'JWIN' is a unit conversion tool, with most common units covered. The only important thing I felt to be missing was currency conversion.

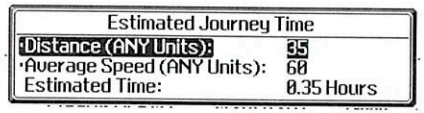


JWIN on a Siena



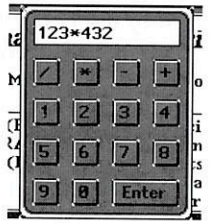
Dates - Calculate the number of days between two dates, the day of the week that a certain date falls upon, and show the date of any given Easter Sunday.

Calculations - Work out journey times and VAT quickly and easily.



Easy to install and with a very low memory overhead, JWIN comes with full on-line help, and even a handy little mini-calculator. Possibly a little superfluous as the Psion has its own CALC, but a nice piece of programming nonetheless.

In the text file accompanying the program, the author says that JWIN was created to allow him access to a collection of general utilities without taking up a huge amount of space. He goes on to describe himself as "a 16 year old... with limited OPL experience." As with his other two programs, it's difficult to find fault with Phil's programming abilities, so hopefully we can expect more offerings in the same class as this useful and well-written application.



If, after the 25 day evaluation period, you wonder how you ever coped without it, the registration fee of just £5 (or US$10), is a small price to pay.

Pete Sipple

InfoBOX

JWIN21F.ZIP (19K) is available from the usual shareware sources, and from *http://homepages.nildram.co.uk/~nicko/jwin.htm*

Registration costs £5

OPPDBG Debugger

One thing missing from OPL software development on the Psion is a debugger. A debugger is a tool used to test programs by allowing you to watch them run, and to examine and change OPL variables on the fly to break free from the 'code, build, test' cycle. It also removes the need for the usual method of debugging: a multitude of PRINT statements to find out the values of variables and program execution flow.

executes on the Psion. You can see the lines of OPL code as they are interpreted, set breakpoints to pause the execution, and examine or change variables and memory.

OPPDBG itself is an OPA application with a set of supporting files. These include a manual, optional splash screen and help files, and some *include* files (these are OPP header files that are **#include**d in your program).

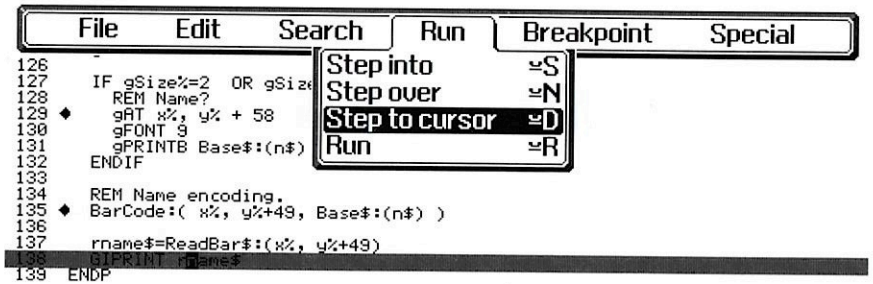
To enable the debugger, you have a '**#pragma debug**' line in your OPP program, and a **#include** to pull in the debugger *include* files. The pragma line tells OPP that it should generate debug code hooks which are used by the debugger. This is all done transparently, and apart from the pragma and include, a program being debugged looks identical to the normal version, though the OPO file size produced is somewhat larger.

The OPPDBG splash screen, showing a rather large bug!

Andy Clarkson (the author of *Plan* for the 3a) has filled this programming gap with a shareware OPL debugger called OPPDBG. Although 'OPL debugger' is not quite an accurate description, as OPPDBG works with OPP, Andy's popular OPL preprocessor **(see Programmers' Workshop in issue 4 of *Palmtop* for a mini-review of OPP - Ed.)**

The debugger runs as a standalone application separate from the program being tested, but through which you can monitor and control your program as it

Before you run the program, you should quit out of the OPP editor to free up the



The main screen with line numbers, breakpoints, and highlighted program line

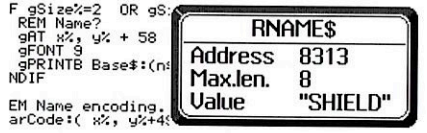
OPP source file. This allows the debugger to pick up and display the source lines, otherwise OPPDBG can't see the source code and only shows the line numbers as they execute.

OPPDBG starts automatically when the test program is run. The main view shows the OPP program lines as they appear in the OPP editor, but with a highlight on the line currently being executed. Your program is suspended until you choose how it should run: by single stepping through each line one at a time, stepping over (instead of into) procedure calls, or you can move the OPPDBG cursor to a line of code and tell it to run until the cursor is hit. This is similar to setting a *breakpoint* on the line. A breakpoint (marked with a black diamond on the line) does nothing until program execution reaches it, then it makes the program stop. You can set many breakpoints throughout the program, around portions of code that you're interested in. Finally you can choose to run your program normally. At any time the program is running, you can hit the <Esc> key in the debugger to pause the run.

The OPPDBG screen automatically jumps to the foreground whenever execution is paused, with the highlight on the current line, allowing you to examine the program.

Using a debugger in this fashion can mean having to flip back and forth between the test program and the debugger, and the text manual that comes with OPPDBG suggests you assign one application button to the debugger app and one to your program, allowing you to switch quickly between the two. Perhaps one feature missing here is a 'jump to test program' option in the debugger, which would have removed the need to assign one of the application buttons.

A big 'plus' feature is the ability to show OPP files larger than the 40K limit imposed by the OPL editor. OPP files



Finding the value of a variable

can get quite large, so it can be a problem navigating around the source file, but OPPDBG allows you to jump to a particular line number (which in true programmer fashion starts at line zero!), jump to the current executing line, or find a search string.

As well as showing the program execution, the other main feature for a debugger is to monitor variables and memory. OPPDBG allows any local variable or memory location to be displayed: just move the cursor onto a variable, choose 'show variable' and up it pops. Also, the calling stack can be displayed, though this is just a list of memory addresses (not the procedure names).

You can also set variables and examine or set memory locations. Unfortunately, the ability to continually monitor the value of a variable (or memory location) during a program run is not present.

There are some customisable features: the font size can be one of the four standard fonts as used in WORD, or you can pick the scrunched font that appears in the Comms application, allowing you to see up to 23 x 80 characters at a time. Another option lets you view line numbers and breakpoint markers, and change the tab width. These settings are stored in an INI file ready for the next time OPPDBG is used.

Although code execution slows down when running a debug version of a program, you can elect to debug selected portions of your code, leaving the bulk untouched, which helps to minimise debug time. The text manual explains how to do this, as well as some more technical details of how the debugger operates (e.g. the EPOC message passing routines). The on-line help file covers all the basic points too.

OPPDBG is distributed as shareware, with nag screens to encourage you to register, though it is 100% functional. Registration costs £10 and disables the nag screens. Remember that you will also need OPP version 1.4 in order to use it.

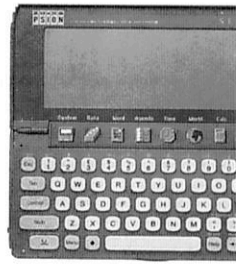
Overall, OPPDBG is an excellent addition to OPP, and a useful tool for squashing bugs!

Rick Andrews

InfoBOX

DEBUGGER.ZIP (24K) is available from the usual shareware sources. Registration costs £10.

Programmers' Workshop



by Leigh Edwards

In the last issue I gave a brief overview of OVAL, the new Object-based Visual Application Language from Psion. This time we'll have a closer look at the OVAL Integrated Development Environment (IDE) and the facilities available to applications programmers.

Object-based Visual Application Language.

As outlined last time, OVAL is essentially Visual Basic for the Psion, 'Object-based' just refers to the way of working when developing an application. OVAL is code-compatible with Microsoft Visual Basic (VB) and includes over thirty controls that are specially designed for building Psion applications.

Here's the news—some good, some bad

OVAL introduces visual programming and rapid application development and prototyping to the Psion environment. It appears to be a very powerful and flexible programming system which should dramatically speed up application development. If you know VB you'll quickly be on your way with OVAL. Even if you don't, producing your first application should be considerably quicker than starting from scratch with OPL, and immeasurably faster than tackling the Psion C Software Development Kit (C SDK).

Having given you the good news, now brace yourself for the bad. In order to run OVAL applications the Psion *must* contain the OVAL run-time interpreter, this is currently limited to the 3c and the

latest incarnation of its industrial relative, the Work*about*. So even though development is faster, don't expect there to be a rush of new OVAL-based applications, or for there to be a hungry market just waiting to be satisfied. It's bound to take quite some time for the number of potential customers to reach a sensible level.

However, OVAL is very good news for industrial/commercial developers, where the time and hence the cost of developing applications for business-specific tasks was a major inhibitor.

Like OPL, OVAL is an interpreted language rather than compiled, so some applications will not be as fast as they could be. In rare cases, for example where there are very heavy computational requirements, it may be necessary to write sections of code in C or assembler to achieve adequate speed.

Finally, OVAL applications are event driven, in other words they are capable of handling events arriving from multiple sources. Applications should therefore always remain responsive to user actions, plus other event sources like timers and input/output from devices such as the serial port. This so-called *asynchronous* operation is difficult to achieve in OPL or (HWIF C) and usually requires the use of Object Oriented Programming (e.g. HWIM C).

Working with OVAL

To develop in OVAL you'll need the Windows-based IDE, which features an intelligent source code editor, code translators for Psion computers and all the application controls. Applications are produced graphically using the PC-based IDE and are tested after translation using a suitable Psion computer connected via a serial link cable.

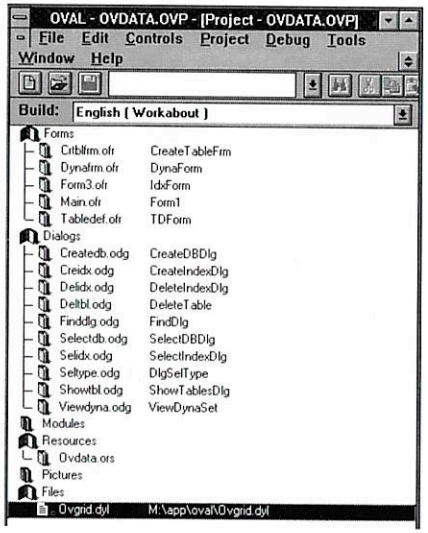
The OVAL IDE requires a PC-compatible running either Windows or OS/2.

Building an Application

OVAL applications are held in 'project' files which have the extension .OVP. The components of a project are: Forms, Dialogs, Modules, Resources, Pictures and Files.

To help you get started a number of example applications are provided with the IDE. The screen shot at the top of the following page shows a database example OVDATA.OVP loaded into the OVAL IDE.

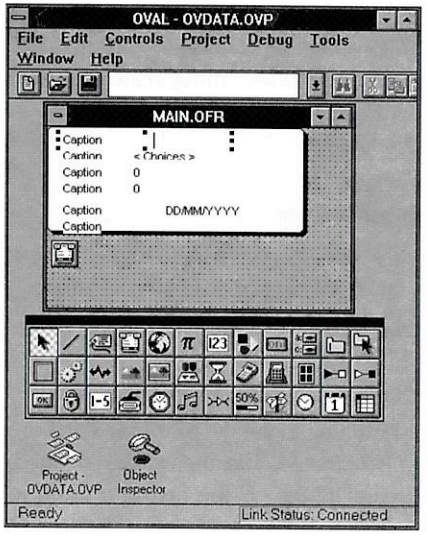
OVAL provides facilities to the programmer via an extensive range of keywords and functions within the language itself, and via the numerous controls available and their associated properties. The basic elements of an OVAL application are 'forms' and 'controls'. Each program usually has at least one form, which is the graphical backdrop on which the interface



The OVAL IDE

elements (or controls) are placed: i.e. menus, user input, text, graphics, etc..

In the screen shot below, the main form is open for editing. Also shown is the control selection palette.



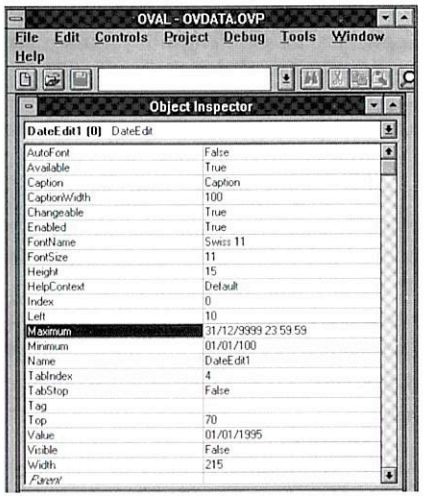
A form appears as a window when the application is run; a form is required for each window or dialog in the application.

Example controls include: text, menus, buttons, input fields, date entry, file selectors, timers, clocks, etc. Each control has information associated with it: its physical appearance, its current state—everything the user can do to it and with it (its events), and the code that determines what the application does in response to a given event.

All the information relating to a control is stored in its *properties*. For example, the pressed or un-pressed state of a button is a property, so is its size, position on the form, its colour, etc.

Imagine a control such as a button—it has an appearance and a state: on or off. It responds to one event, when it gets pressed. When pressed, OVAL changes the appearance and state of the button, and generates a suitable event. Usually a procedure will have been written, in OVAL BASIC, to specifically handle such an event—OVAL then executes that procedure. The procedure might for example display a dialog box, or quit the program, etc.

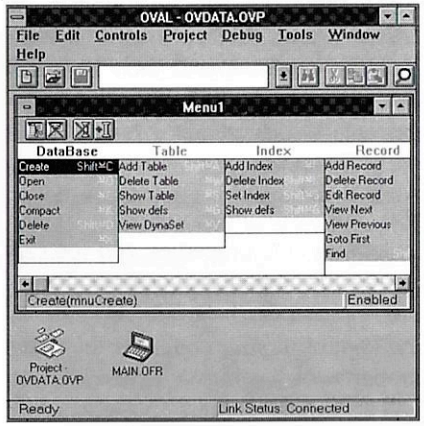
You can get information from a control by looking at its properties, and you can also set the properties in order to change the appearance, behaviour or state of the control. If your code sets the 'state property' of the button to 'on', OVAL will change the button's appearance just as if it had been pressed. Some controls



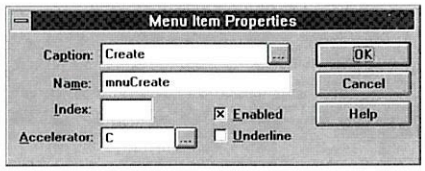
The Object Inspector

are hidden and do not actually appear on the screen, but are useful nonetheless. A good example is the *Timer* control, which simply generates an event after a specified period of time.

In the form example above a date edit field can be seen, indicated by



Creating menus...



dd/mm/yyyy. The specific characteristics of that field can be seen and modified by using the object inspector shown opposite.

As you can see, a wide range of attributes can be varied including the initial date value, the minimum and maximum values for the field, etc.

Sophisticated menus are easily created using the menu editor as shown in the example screen at the bottom left of this page.

Accelerator keys and corresponding subroutines are associated with the menu options created within the application. In the menu item dialog box shown, the accelerator key for the menu option is set to <Shift><Psion><C> and the sub-routine 'mnuCreate', shown below, is called when the menu option is selected.

```
Sub mnuCreate_Click ()
    Dbload = DATA_CREATE
    CreateDBDlg.Show
End Sub
```

The sub-routine 'mnuCreate' opens a user dialog to get details of the database to be created. The dialog box opened, CreateDBDlg, is the first one listed in

the main project view (the very first screen shot) shown under the heading 'Dialogs'.

IDE - Integrated Development Extras?

As well as allowing creation of forms, dialogs, program code and menus, the OVAL IDE contains a number of very useful additional 'project sections' i.e. Modules, Resources, Pictures and Files.

Modules: are containers for code and data. An OVAL project consists of one or more modules. A form module, for example, contains the description of the form, information about it, and all the controls and code associated with that form. Each module resides in a separate file associated with the project. Code attached to a particular form is private to that form—that is, code in other forms cannot access it. Sections of program code placed in a code module is accessible to all parts of an OVAL program, i.e. they are used for code which you want to be able to access from several forms.

Resources: are used to store program specific string information, constant data and user help text. When the application is built the resource information can be included in the resulting .APP file. Separating this type of information away from the program code eases the production of multi-lingual applications.

Pictures: holds the file names for bitmap files, such as the program icon and any other bitmaps that may be used by the application. PC-type bitmap (.BMP) files may also be included, and they will be converted to .PIC format before being transferred to the Psion.

Files: may hold the names of any other files required by the application, they will be copied over to the Psion as required.

In Conclusion

OVAL is an exciting new option for Psion applications development. However due to the initially limited customer base it will take quite some time for OVAL applications to become commonplace in the domestic market, although the situation is likely to be very different in the corporate world—which I believe is Psion's real target market for OVAL. Over the next few years as the user base of OVAL-capable machines increases I would expect to see OVAL shareware becoming more common. However, because it is not possible to develop and test OVAL programs on the Psion machines themselves I do not anticipate OVAL rivalling OPL in the foreseeable future.

The author can be contacted via e-mail using ple@cix.compulink.co.uk or Compuserve 100533,1726 or via Palmtop magazine.

A beginner looks at the 3a manual

by Brian Read

Last year I bought a new bicycle. There was no instruction manual with it. Bicycles have been with us for over a century. In the 1890s enterprising young men set up 'schools of cycling'. Today the bicycle is such a familiar possession that users need no instruction, no explanations, no glossaries of words such as gears, chain, handlebars and so on.

Personal computers have been around for little more than ten years. Most people have never owned one and many have never touched a computer keyboard. For them the vocabulary of computing is intimidating jargon. To these people a file is something made of paper, a programme (*sic*) is what you get at the theatre, and a menu is found only in a restaurant. They get confused when they discover these words have entirely different meanings to a computer user.

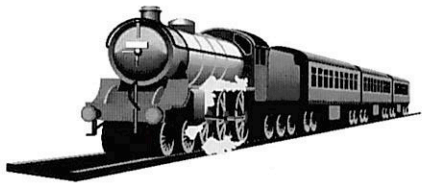
Take 'file' for example. A complete beginner may not appreciate what the computer user means by this most commonly used word. Expressions such as 'copying a file' or 'changing a filename' will be almost meaningless until the new user grasps the idea of a computer file. The writer of the Psion manual appreciated the importance of this elementary fact and explains what 'file' means in a paragraph headed *The internal disk* on page 15. However the beginner may well have wanted this explanation before page 15, perhaps having been puzzled when a section called 'files' was seen on the help screen. A glossary or an index of basic words and expressions would have been a useful addition to the manual.

Perhaps most people who buy a Psion are accustomed to using a computer. If they've graduated from MS-DOS to Windows then ten minutes with a 3a is all they'll need before they can use it confidently and effectively. They're hardly likely to give the manual more than a quick glance.

The user manual *should* be designed for the rest: the people who know little or nothing about the arcane commands of MS-DOS, and think that Windows are things that should be double-glazed.

Continued on page 65...

A little Psion Fiction...



by Fiona Litchfield

09:00 Buffet trolley nudges nearer. The customer service operative leans close, casting a shadow over my book. Smiles. Notice slight perspiration on his upper lip.

"Tea, coffee?"

"Nothing, thank you."

He persists, "Alcohol, snack?" I rummage for coins. He dispenses 3-pack of biscuits and is gone, apparently ignoring the needs of a Times reader and pushing brutally past loitering ankles and briefcases.

The landscape is passing swiftly by. I look down at the unappetising snack. Boredom draws me to read the wrapper. I read the RDA listings on breakfast cereal packets, you know how it is. This is different.

'NIIPS operative, your mission, should you choose to accept it, is to infiltrate the Psion intelligentsia and discredit their status. NIIPS has suffered several loses recently with key personnel crossing to the other side. The Psion organisation are openly boasting of 'Project Siena'. Your cover will be that of an accredited writer. False ID is under your seat in the name of Quiller. These biscuits will crumble in ten seconds. Good luck.'

A nasally-challenged voice announced that we had reached journey's end. The doors eased open and I was thrust onto the platform. Next stop The Net. I'd heard it was the place for gleaning information. I had an underground contact—the cybercafe wasn't difficult to find. I tried the Official Psion site first. As I suspected it told me nothing that I didn't already know from my earlier briefing.

My eyes fell on the guy opposite, I was drawn by the flares that had somehow entangled themselves around the stem of his chair. He smiled, I smiled. He held his Psion like an amateur, a carrier bag on the floor, this had to be my contact.

"Mind if I join you?" I whispered as I slid into a vacant seat nearby. "Totally authentic outfit by the way."

"Quiet," he hissed. "NIIPS?" I nodded in the affirmative. "It's worse than we thought, they've got the hardware stashed all over the place, they have an efficient infrastructure that allows them to pass software—like that" It's hard to describe the snap of his fingers. It sent a chill down my spine. "Put the hardware and the software together and I'm telling you its dynamite! They've got programs for organising your waking and your sleeping, spending and saving and even mine sweeping! Get this..." he flipped open the Psion. "A programme for doing your shopping!"

He was right. This had implications for everyone. Heck! Shopping by Psion? It was a threat to the heart of democracy!

He slid a package across the table. "Don't open it yet. Siena. Ciao!" And was gone.

I never saw him again. I...

Transmission ends.

This is where our contact with agent Quiller ends. Was the will to resist 'Siena' an impossible mission? All agents are warned, this agent's license to operate has been revoked. Report any sightings to Command HQ.

At all cost avoid personal contact.

*NIIPS—Never Indulge In Psion's Society.

For Sale

***Psion Money,* on SSD and complete with manual - £25**

Also PsiWin for 3c/Siena, brand new and boxed with manuals. Bought in error - £55 ono

Contact: Nick Boden
tel: (01892) 510903

***3Fax Modem* with manuals and software - £100 including postage**

Contact: Colin Blagdon
tel: (01634) 281515
fax: (01634) 578276

***4Mb flash SSD,* 6 months old (owner needs 8Mb) - £250**

Contact: Peter Cooper
tel: (01234) 266585

***Apple Macintosh Link,* complete with disks and manuals - £45**

Contact: Barry King
tel: (0181) 9851747 (evenings)

***FloChart* by Purple Software - £20**

Contact: 'Ozzie'
tel: (0181) 7813007 (daytime)
or (0181) 569225 (evenings)

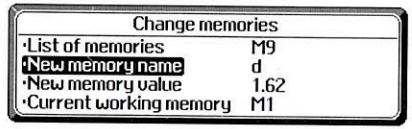
Convert!

Steve Clack takes a look at the various ways you can use your Psion to perform common (or uncommon) calculations and unit conversions

Unit conversions, whether they are between Metric and Imperial measures, different currencies or time formats can be a tedious and repetitive chore. Looking across columns of a paper table can be an eye-boggling experience. Desktop computers offer little help, because they are hardly ever with you when you most need them. In terms of processing power the requirements of most of the calculations involved are minuscule, all that is generally required are a few on-screen prompts for the entry of variables, and the computer then does one or two multiplication or division sums, and displays the result. Simple.

Using CALC

At the simplest level you can just use your Psion's built-in calculator to ease the process of repetitive calculations. The calculator offers 10 memories, each of which can be assigned a name of up to 8 characters. If you want to convert UK£ to US$ then you can enter the conversion factor as a *constant* into one of the memories, and assign a suitable name. For example: go to the 'Change memories' option (<Psion><M>) within the calculator, and rename one of the unused memories to something more meaningful: preferably a single character, because you have to type it in each time you make a calculation. Unfortunately you are limited to the letters a-z—you cannot use symbols like the dollar sign. Type your conversion constant into the 'New memory value' line, then press the <Enter> key to save



the changes. You can then enter calculations in the form '47*d' to convert 47UK£ into US$, or '47/d' to convert 47US$ into UK£.

```
  47*d
=76.14
  47/d
-----------
=29.012345679
```

This is a relatively crude way of working, but if your conversion needs are simple and only require you to multiply or divide by a single *constant* value then a few calculator memory assignments may suffice. Of course you have to remember whether to multiply or divide based upon which way you are converting, but this is not difficult once you have been through the process a few times. If you are converting something with a changing value (like currency), then don't forget to regularly update the memory location with the latest rates.

Using a spreadsheet

Another solution that doesn't involve spending any money on software—use your built-in spreadsheet. One of our readers, Ken Johnson of Bath, has created a couple of elegant spreadsheets to perform common calculations.

Numbers to convert are entered at the 'a:' and 'b:' prompts at the top of the sheet (see below). The sheet shown below converts common Imperial measures into Metric equivalents, so to convert 14.2 inches into metric just type '14.2' into the 'a:' box. To convert 14 gallons and 2 pints into metric you enter the primary units (gallons) into the 'a:' box, and the secondary units (pints) into the 'b:' box. The units you have entered then appear in *all* the Imperial unit boxes, so you can see every metric equivalent at a glance. A second spreadsheet is used to convert in the other direction, as everything in the sheet below is set to convert one way only.

Ken has developed his implementation of the idea into a slick and professional-looking template, with neat formatting

C1 14

Convert	a: 14	b: 2			
LENGTH	14 Inches	2 Tenths	(14.2 Inches) =	360.68 mm	
	14 Inches	2 Tenths	(14.2 Inches) =	36.07 cm	
	14 Feet	2 Inches	(14.2 Feet) =	4.32 m	
	14 Yards	2 Feet	(14.7 Yards) =	13.41 m	
	14 Miles	2 Yards	(14.0 Miles) =	22.53 km	
VOLUME	14 Pints	2 Fl Ounces	(14.1 Pints) =	8.01 litres	
	14 Gallons	2 Pints	(14.3 Gallons) =	64.77 litres	
WEIGHT	14 Pounds	2 Ounces	(14.1 Pounds) =	6406.70 g	
	14 Pounds	2 Ounces	(14.1 Pounds) =	6.41 kg	
	14 Stones	2 Pounds	(14.1 Stones) =	89.81 kg	/cont.

Setting up a spreadsheet template to perform your calculations

of cells, appropriate setting of cell formats to avoid giving unnecessarily high-precision values like 14.3827364, and he's locked most of the cells to prevent accidentally changing the underlying calculations.

This kind of solution requires a little bit of thought and preparation, but can give excellent results and allows you to use quite complex calculations with as many variables and constants as you need. You can customise your spreadsheet to include only the conversions you want, and you can continually refine it as your needs change.

Buying software

Buying software 'off the shelf' may seem like the easiest solution, but that's not necessarily true. If your profession or hobby involves uncommon or complex conversions and calculations you may find that none of the conversion packages available will convert the units you work on.

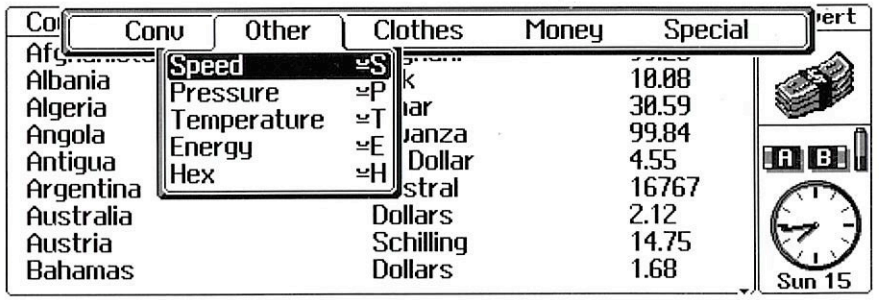
There are many shareware conversion programs available, plus one commercial, and a second commercial one due for release soon. None of these programs offer the ultimate flexibility of a package written around ten years ago for the old *Psion Organiser II*. Psion veterans may remember 'Formulator', a program containing a wide selection of common conversions, but it also had the eminently logical capability to 'build your own' conversions, just by entering an example of the calculation you wish to create. You could thus enter 'force=mass*acceleration', and then every time you entered the word 'force' the program would prompt you to enter the variables for 'mass' and 'acceleration', and would then proceed to calculate and display the result. This technique wasn't appropriate for every kind of calculation, but for building a reference library of obscure conversions and formulae calculations it had no peer. Sadly there appears to be no current equivalent for evaluating complex formulae in this way—as opposed to merely converting units.

With the software currently available, you'll need to be careful what you pick. If the program you are considering doesn't explicitly cover all the unit conversions you are looking for then you had better look elsewhere. There are some specific programs available that only handle one specific type of conversion (like length units, for instance), but there are several that have a more general scope.

Here we take a quick look at some of the more interesting programs available:

Purple Toolkit 1

This is a package that's been available from Purple Software for several years now, and combines their superlative File Manager program with a graphic file format convertor, a printing utility and a general purpose conversion package.



Toolkit 1—containing Purple Software's hidden conversion program

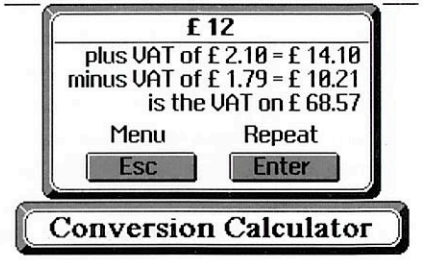
Reviewed more fully in issue 4 of *Palmtop*, the conversion package offers menu selections to convert most common metric/imperial units, clothing and shoe sizes, a hex/octal/binary/decimal convertor, plus a few others—all against a backdrop screen giving dozens of currency exchange rates. This is a reasonable general purpose package, particularly useful for anyone buying clothing while on holiday! The complete package costs £49.95 on SSD including VAT.

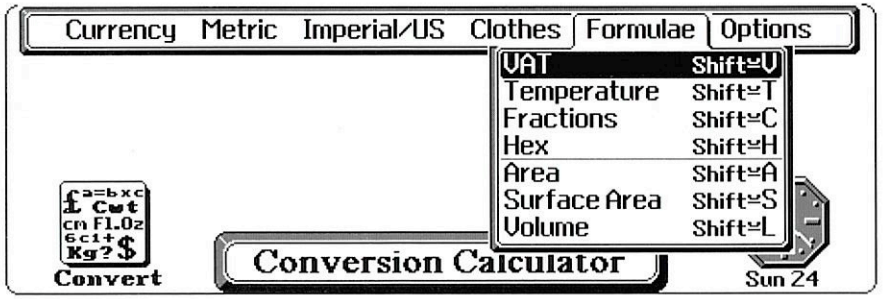
JOAT (Jack Of All Trades)

Not yet released, JOAT promises to be perhaps the most comprehensive conversion package for engineers, scientists and anyone requiring a more serious set of features. The full feature list for JOAT is not complete at the time of going to press, but we will feature a full review of this package as soon as it becomes available. Pricing is also not finalised at this point, but the software will be available from Inhand Systems Ltd, tel: (07000) 781050, or fax: (07000) 781051.

Conversion Calculator V.6c1

Available as shareware, CON3A.ZIP expands on the units covered by the Purple Software package, to cover even more clothing conversions (including hats), a good VAT (tax) calculator, and a fraction evaluator that converts both to and from decimals. Good coverage of metric/imperial units round off this useful program, which runs in English, French or German. It has the most irritating nag screen that pops up every time it does a calculation, but if you like the program the small £10 asking price will soon remove the reminder for you.

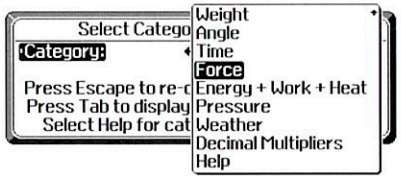




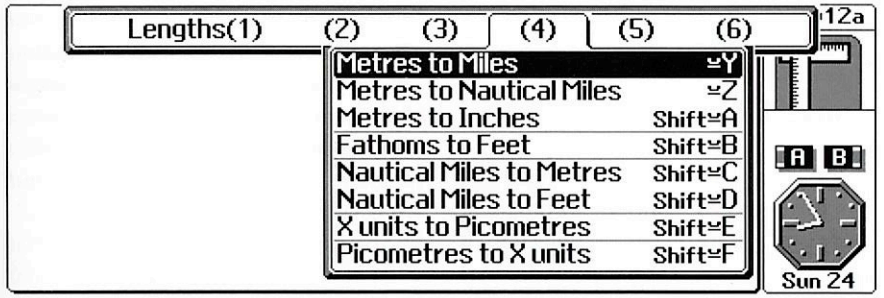
Convert 1.3A (Paul Synnott)

CONVER3A.ZIP is an original and interesting shareware convertor for the Series 3a/3c. A 'sister' program, CONVERT3.ZIP is also available for those with a Series 3 Classic. This program has a rather unconventional interface, but boasts an arsenal of more than 300 conversions and allows you to configure the results to however many decimal places you wish, and will even print hard copy results to an attached printer (parallel only).

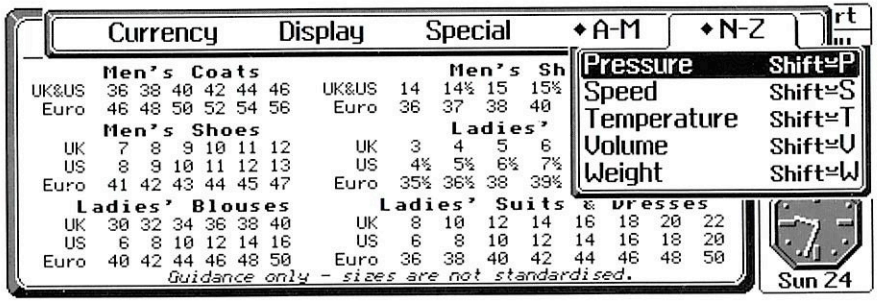
A few aspects of the interface could perhaps use a little more polishing, but the general coverage is quite excellent. This program will convert everything from Light Years-Parsecs and cubic inches-gallons. There are one or two spelling mistakes in the menus, but considering that the author is only 15 years old this program is a very impressive effort. It includes some really unusual conversions such as wind chill factors, angular and time unit conversions, and includes a wealth of arcane English units such as bushels and pecks.



Convert 13A in action



Convert 13A—an enormous range of unit conversions


Currency
Display
Special
♦A-M
♦N-Z
Men's Coats
UK&US 36 38 40 42 44 46
Euro 46 48 50 52 54 56
Men's Shoes
UK 7 8 9 10 11 12
US 8 9 10 11 12 13
Euro 41 42 43 44 45 47
Ladies' Blouses
UK 30 32 34 36 38 40
US 6 8 10 12 14 16
Euro 40 42 44 46 48 50
Men's Sh
UK&US 14 14½ 15 15½
Euro 36 37 38 40
Ladies'
UK 3 4 5 6
US 4½ 5½ 6½ 7½
Euro 35½ 36½ 38 39½
Ladies' Suits & Dresses
UK 8 10 12 14 16 18 20 22
US 6 8 10 12 14 16 18 20
Euro 36 38 40 42 44 46 48 50
Guidance only - sizes are not standardised.
Pressure Shift=P
Speed Shift=S
Temperature Shift=T
Volume Shift=V
Weight Shift=W
Sun 24

ConVert 1.2-10

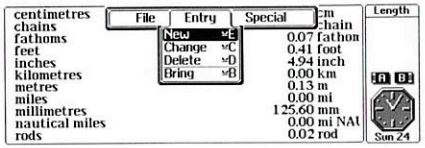
The program also includes some useful reference information on decimal prefixes, and has extensive online help. If you are looking for something obscure then Convert 13A is probably your best bet, and at a mere £8 registration fee it is great value for money.

ConVert 1.2-10

A freeware program falling somewhere between the Purple Software offering and Conversion Calculator V6c1, ConVert sports yet another different interface, and effectively uses the 3a/3c diamond key to cycle between numerous options and reference tables. The filename is CNVT2-16.ZIP.

Convert 2.10

This program attempts the flexibility of the Organiser II Formulator program, and to a certain extent it succeeds. It allows the user to enter additional conversions to the currency, length, mass, temperature and volume units provided, but only allows calculations with a single operator and operand. In other words you can only use it for calculations involving a single variable. Nevertheless, CNV21.ZIP offers a useful level of extensibility not found in any of the other packages, and the program will run in either English or German language variants. Registration costs $15US.



Convert 2.10

In summary, there are a wide range of conversion options available, whether you do it yourself with the calculator or spreadsheet, or if you choose to obtain a program to do it for you. Conversion programs are appearing all the time, and we have by no means covered them all. Just be sure that you know exactly what you need before you decide which route to take, and then start looking...

Getting to grips...

Working with WORD

A series aimed at the relative beginner to the Psion's built-in programs.

We continue with the fifth part of our tutorial on using WORD, the Psion word processor...

By Steve Clack

Last time around we looked into the business of line spacing, and examined one of the ways to control your paragraph spacing. This technique of using the 'Set spacing' dialog to control the white space between each paragraph works well, and has the advantage of giving you very precise control over how much space you want between both your paragraphs and each individual line. It's a good idea to exercise a little trial and error here, as it's surprising how quite subtle changes can make a printed letter look more readable.

As a general rule, be careful not to space the lines of a paragraph too close together—it makes large blocks of text difficult and tiring to read. On the other hand don't double space your lines either—unnecessary expanses of white space will spoil the flow of your letter.

The only disadvantage of the method we employed in the last issue is that all the paragraph spacing is done at the time of printing, which means that you don't see any spaces between paragraphs while compiling the text on screen. This can make the document difficult to follow until you print it out.

The only way to get around this is to press the <Enter> key every time you come to the end of a paragraph, which will then show a space of exactly one line between each paragraph. Having now made the document much easier to

25 September 1996

Dear John and Mary,

It was good to speak with you on the telephone last Wednesday, and to catch up on the latest gossip about the family. I'm glad that Auntie Mary is fit and well, and that the children are doing so well at school.

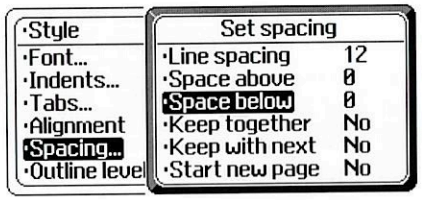
Everything is still going well here, and Frank starts his college course on Monday. Janet did very well at her squash tournament yesterday, coming second in her group, and I'll give you some more

Our document with carriage returns added—easier to read on screen

read on screen, our paragraph spacing will then be upset when printing.

Our spacing was previously set to 12 points below each paragraph in the 'Set spacing' dialog, to which we have just added a whole line height. Remember that line spacing is equivalent to the point size of the text you have specified: so your line spacing has now become 12 + 12 = 24 points (using 12 point text), which is most certainly too much.

The trick here is of course to subtract the extra line from the value in the 'Space below' line of the 'Set spacing' dialog. In the case of the document we have been working on, this is 12 points minus 12 points (the height of that extra line we put in by pressing the <Enter> key). 12 - 12 = 0, so we change the 'Space below' line to zero (see screen shot below). You can control the inter-paragraph spacing quite easily if you use this method—just remember to always subtract one line height from your calculations. The only limitation of this technique is that you cannot have a paragraph spacing of *less* than one line (your current point size), because you've already put that extra line in between each and every paragraph. This isn't usually a problem though, and in this example a 'Space below' setting of zero will give a printed document that looks identical to the one shown at the foot of page 60 in the previous issue.



All this talk of line and paragraph spacings may seem unnecessary to some, but incorrect settings here are one of the most common sources of misprinted documents, and it's well worth taking the time to understand what's going on.

There are other formatting features to control the precise layout of your document, but we have covered the most important ones over the past few issues, and the information you have learned should be enough to format your general correspondence in a tidy and professional fashion.

It was good to speak with you on the telephone last Wednesday, and to catch up on the latest gossip about the family. I'm glad that Auntie Mary is fit and well, and that the children are doing so well at school.

Everything is still going well here, and Frank starts his college course on Monday. Janet did very well at her squash tournament yesterday, coming second in her group, and I'll give you some more news on this when I see her in town for lunch the tomorrow.

▸This is the the second time I've written to you this mounth, as I want

(D)delete this occurrence (S)skip

The spelling checker also finds doubled words—very handy

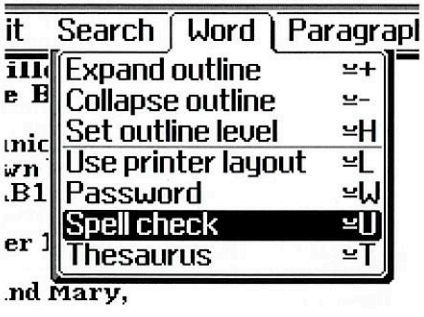
To complete this tutorial we'll spell check the document, look briefly at the rather useful thesaurus, then set up the document for printing. Finally, we'll save the bare bones of our formatted document as a template that you can re-use in the future.

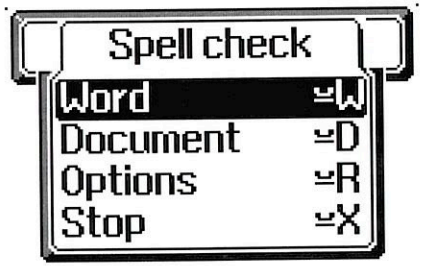
To finish off the text of the letter, just type a few more short paragraphs containing anything you like, and put your normal salutation (like "best regards, John Smith") at the bottom of the page.

If you have a 1Mb or 2Mb 3a or 3c, then the spell checker and thesaurus is built into your machine, if you have a Series 3 or a 256K/512K 3a then you can buy it separately on SSD (see the review in issue 1 of *Palmtop*), but if you have a Siena then you'll have to manage without it.

I've always found the lexicon of the Psion spell checker to be quite extensive, and have even used it to look up words that aren't in the vocabulary of my desktop word processor. No matter how confident you are with your own spelling prowess it's always prudent to run your documents through a spelling checker if you have the chance, as apart from finding mis-spelt words they will also find sentences where you accidentally typed the same word twice (as in "this is the the second time I've typed this word"), or places where you've merely had a slip of the typing fingers and typed "teh" instead of "the". This is an especially easy mistake to make when using a palmtop computer such as the Psion, because the keyboard is so tiny.

To spell check a document, go into the 'Word' menu, or type <Psion><U> directly. On selecting the spell checker, you are presented with a small sub-



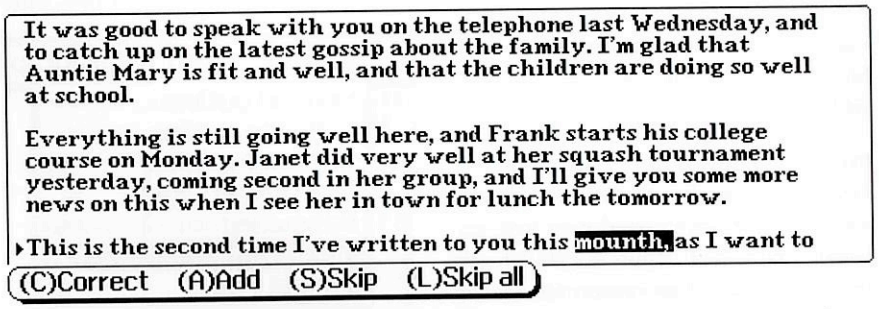


menu of options: these options allow you to select whether you spell check only the word on or closest to the cursor, or the entire document you are working on. The 'Options' selection opens another dialog from which you select whether the checker should ignore numbers and symbols, words typed entirely in capital letters, and how it should treat doubled words (like "the the" in the example earlier).

Don't forget that there is also another spell checker preferences menu, accessed by launching the checker from its own icon under the system screen. This controls global checking preferences such as whether it looks for transposed characters ("teh" instead of "the"), how it handles accented characters and so on. Take a look at the spell checker section of your manual for more information on how to configure these settings.

If you opt to check the entire document the checker will always start from the current cursor position and proceed forwards through the document. Once it reaches the end it will pop up a dialog box saying 'Check start of document?' Assuming that you actually intended to check the entire document then you *must* say 'Yes' here, which makes the checker jump back to the top of the document and go through everything above where you initially started. It will automatically stop when it gets back to the place you started from—don't worry that it's going to re-check the same text over again.

Whenever the checker comes across a mis-spelt word, it highlights the word and pops up a box just like the one below. In the next instalment we'll look at what all the options do, and then move on to the thesaurus and printing.


It was good to speak with you on the telephone last Wednesday, and to catch up on the latest gossip about the family. I'm glad that Auntie Mary is fit and well, and that the children are doing so well at school.
Everything is still going well here, and Frank starts his college course on Monday. Janet did very well at her squash tournament yesterday, coming second in her group, and I'll give you some more news on this when I see her in town for lunch the tomorrow.
This is the second time I've written to you this mounth as I want to
(C)Correct (A)Add (S)Skip (L)Skip all

These are the options when the spell checker comes across a mis-spelt word...

Programmers' Surgery

The continuation of our regular feature in which Rick ("The Doc") Andrews addresses your programming questions and woes...

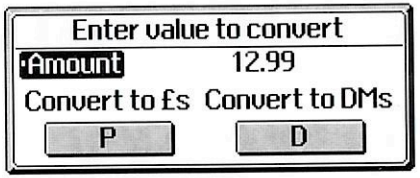
More dialogue with DIALOG

I recently tried to write an OPL program to convert £s to DMs. I thought that using the dialog feature would be the simplest and most attractive option for a beginner. The Psion manual offers several ways to use a dialog i.e. "`dtext`" or "`dbuttons`", but only gives the syntax for that line of code. The manual then goes on to say that the dialog returns a value which can be used to control the actions of the program. The problem is that it then says nothing about how to do it. I can create the buttons, but can't action them with the key press as the manual leads me to believe I should.

David Stirling
Quedgeley, Gloucester

This question usefully follows on from my previous Surgery article (in issue 9) which explained how to set up dialogs using `dINIT`, `dTEXT` and `DIALOG`. As you've said, the `DIALOG` command returns a value that shows how the user interacted with the program. For example, if the <Esc> key is pressed, this cancels the dialog and `DIALOG` returns 0.

The dBUTTONS command allows the programmer to specify 'clickable' buttons which appear at the bottom of the dialog box—each button has a text description to explain its action.



—Buttons set using dBUTTONS

If a button is pressed, the dialog returns with the value of that button. For example, if we look at the following OPL segment showing a simple currency convertor, dBUTTONS "Convert to £s",%p is used to create the P button. If the user hits 'p' in the dialog, the DIALOG result will be %p. Note that the %p is shorthand for the ASCII code of p, and saves the programmer from having to remember the code.

One small stumbling block is that the DIALOG command can only appear once per dINIT, so it makes sense to capture the DIALOG value into a variable like this: result% = DIALOG. This can then be tested for each of the button values used. From here, the flow of the rest of the program can be controlled from the result of the dialog. This example uses dBUTTONS and DIALOG to control program flow:

```
PROC Currency:
    LOCAL curr    REM Amount of currency.
    LOCAL  result%    REM Dialog result.
    LOCAL exRate  REM exchange rate
    exRate = 2.55 REM DM to pound.
    WHILE 1
        dINIT "Enter value to convert"
        dFLOAT curr, "Amount", 0, 999999
        dBUTTONS "Convert to £s", %p, "Convert to DMs", %d
        result% = DIALOG
        IF result% = 0   REM User hit Escape
            BREAK
        ELSEIF result% = %p
            REM Button P - convert to Pounds
            PRINT curr, "DMs = £"; curr / exRate
        ELSEIF result% = %d
            REM button D - convert to DMs
            PRINT "£"; curr, "=", curr * exRate, "DMs"
        ENDIF
    ENDWH
ENDPA
```


...Continued from page 50

At this point perhaps I should declare my own level of experience. I bought my first computer in 1985—an Apricot running MS-DOS. I was soon persuaded to forget DOS in favour of an Apple Macintosh, and I still use Macs now.

So I came to my 3a with a certain amount of basic knowledge, but with little idea of how to use the Psion's file management system. What is a 'directory structure' I wondered? A 'root directory'? Why are there all these strange slashes in the \filenames\? What exactly do words such as 'merge', 'evaluate' and 'bring' mean in these new menus?

Plain language

The 3a manual is a paperback of about 300 pages, well designed and illustrated and with a clear Table of Contents. (But why *Table of*...and not simply *Contents*?)

The first chapter *Getting Started* is excellent. The language is plain and there is no unnecessary technical jargon. It takes even the most naive user through the basic procedures, using clear illustrations of the screen and small diagrams as guides to the keyboard.

We then move on to chapters covering the various applications: World, Calc, Database, etc. A nice touch is a general description of each application in bold type on one page at the beginning of each chapter.

'Wrong file type'

The first time the manual failed to deliver was when I tried to transfer a database from my Mac to the 3a. The Psion Link cable and software comes with a thin 'User Guide' especially for the Apple. This is reasonably adequate, but did not fully explain how to transfer from my Mac database (FileMaker) into Psion's DATA. However I managed to transfer my data into a WORD file on the Psion and it was at this point that difficulties started. When I tried to read the WORD file I got a message on the Psion screen "Error opening 'myfile' - Wrong file type".

Now, it seems to me that if error messages like this appear on a computer the manual should contain those messages with a detailed explanation. But neither the words 'error' or 'wrong' appear in the index, so at this point the beginner is stuck and has to phone the help line. The answer to the problem is that one has to open a new WORD file and 'Merge' the errant file into it.

'Merge' was not a word familiar to me and I felt I should like to read more about this facility. It doesn't appear under 'M' in the index, but after a search I found 'Merging files' in an entry under WORD.

Later I received by post a well-written and clear document from Psion, headed *Exchanging Data Files with the Macintosh*. Why, I wondered, hadn't this been included in the main manual,

or at any rate in the guide that comes with the Psion Link?

I've never properly understood directory structures, but now that I'm a Psion user perhaps I should grasp the strange jargon of slashes with which they have been burdened. So I've tried. But still it eludes me. But I was pleased to read in the introduction to the manual's chapter 17 ('Files and Disks') that *'You do not need this information, though, ...and some of it is technical.'* Is this a technical knockout, or simply a technical hitch? Either way, I'm still a bit doubtful and feel I should be able to cope with such things as \DAT\RECORDS\.

Soon after I acquired my 3a I wrote to Psion with comments about the manual, and received a reply that *'For the most part, the manuals...are adequate for most people's needs'* (Well, perhaps. But what about the minority?) The letter then went on to say that [the manuals] *'tend to attract an equal amount of praise and vilification, with the vast majority of people somewhere in the middle.'*

This seems to betray a strange attitude for a manufacturer to take: are they saying, 'Let's not bother about the critical comments because most people seem to be satisfied'? I hope not.

To sum up: Psion's user manual for the 3a gets a rating of 90% from this beginner. Its main deficiency is the badly arranged index. This should be completely re-written so that it is in alphabetical order or, better still, supplied as a data file on the machine itself so that the book could be searched thoroughly and quickly.

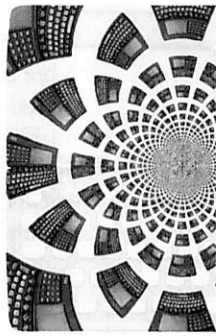
This article has mentioned only a few criticisms of the manual found by one beginner. Other readers will probably remember several ways in which they have found the manual inadequate. A thorough review of any computer manual would require many hours of study as well as comments from a variety of users. Writing a manual is a daunting task: instructions which one user is likely to find over-simplified might well be incomprehensible to another. The first edition of a manual is likely to be sniped at by users who do not find immediate answers to their questions. But gradually, if manufacturers take the trouble to revise their manuals in the light of users' comments, good manuals will evolve. Eventually this evolutionary process should produce an excellent manual that will be a major enhancement for the product. In the long run however computers won't need manuals at all. As with my bicycle, almost any user will be able to pick it up and put it to good use with no instruction whatsoever.

Thankfully, the new 3c manual shows evidence of this evolution. It seems to be a marked improvement, with much of the text thoroughly and thoughtfully re-written. It has the same page size and general appearance, but there are 414 pages instead of 320. This extra size is

Continued on page 98...

Steve's Siena Spot

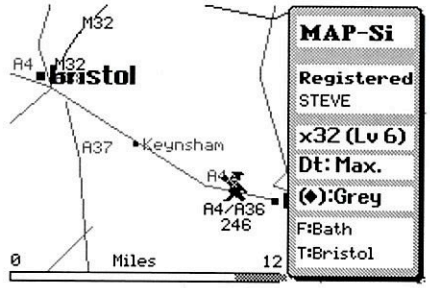
Steve Litchfield talks about Psion's smallest computer in a regular new feature



This is a new column, and you'll have gathered from the title that it's got something to do with the sexy new Psion Siena. More space will be devoted to the machine and its software in future issues, but for now I'll give an overview of the Siena world and try to set the scene.

Much has been written of the Siena itself in recent issues of *Palmtop,* and it is interesting to see how the machine is received by both software authors and the public at large. At the time of writing this (mid-January), there are already 30 or so shareware or freeware programs specifically written for the Siena, plus a couple of commercial offerings. I keep an up-to-date list at *http://web.ukonline.co.uk/Members/slitchfield/siena.htm* if you've got access to the Internet. Accessory companies have already produced various case designs to hold the machine. Pity we're still waiting for things like an SSD drive, printer or modem lead from Psion themselves, though perhaps these will have arrived by the time you read this, and you can at least read a pre-release review of the SSD drive elsewhere in this issue.

I started using the Siena in preference to my 2Mb 3a after I realised that 98% of all the files on the latter were related to my programming activities, and that I mainly did this at my desk. All my personal files (address book, agenda, finance sheets, passworded WORD files



etc.) fitted comfortably into about 100K of disk space and thus were easily squeezed into my 512K Siena. The only thing I missed day to day was my own *Mapper* program. So—guess what? Yes, I ported that over, taking the opportunity to rip out everything that wasn't strictly essential, and managed to get *Mapper-Si/GB* down to just over 100K all in. Two months down the road I'm very happy with this arrangement, using the 3a on my desk to do development work and to store my business databases and spreadsheets.

The Siena's arrival seems to have sparked two main camps of software. Firstly, games authors have flocked to it for some reason, with the pick of the crop being Ian Pinkard's Siena *Ultimate Poker*, which really is quite superb. Each of the computer players has a realistic personality, and the user quickly starts to feel part of a real struggle against real players.

The second group of software provides the basis for the start of this series. In the next issue of *Palmtop* I'll be looking in detail at all the different money-related utilities available. For a unit that's twice as portable as a 3a or 3c, it's even more convenient to have access to ways of logging cashpoint withdrawals and cheques written, at the time they happen rather than later in the day when mistakes could be made.

Until next time.

For Sale

***512K Series 3a* with *PsiWin* software - £165 ono**

Contact: Kevin Ash
tel: (01932) 711031
or (0973) 222823 (mobile)

***1Mb Series 3a* with *PsiWin* software - £200**

Contact: Jo Wright
tel: (01753) 604944 (9am-5pm)
(01784) 432666 (6-10pm)

***512K Series 3a*, boxed and as-new - £120 ono**

also:
***2Mb Series 3c (BACKLIT US-spec. model)* - offers please!**

also:
***PsiWin* - £45**
***Psion Money* - £25**
***Pipemania game* - £15**
***Broadoak games pack* - £20**

All boxed and as-new

Contact: Rob Williams
tel: (01980) 862217

"On The Net"

The latest gossip from the Information Superhighway

Pete Sipple takes a look at what Psion users are discussing on the Internet. Topics this time around include passwords, the Psion 4, Mac connectivity and the future of handheld computers...

In issue 8, we looked at what users had to say about Microsoft's handheld version of Windows software. New machines such as the Casio Cassiopeia and the Philips WinCE have started the ball rolling again...

"How long do you think it will be before Psion's success is dented by the cut-down Windows operating system for palmtops? Will Psion still be a big player in the palmtop game in 5 years time?"

(step2@cix.compulink.co.uk)

"To my mind, Psion and HPCs (Handheld PCs) serve different markets. The Psion is a computer in its own right, and people can, and do, survive with just a Psion. An HPC is designed as a companion to a desktop machine. Psion need to capitalise on this and get their act together with peripherals for the 3c."

(salex@cix.compulink.co.uk)

"Agreed—and bloody quickly too! It's absolutely lamentable. I can't print, fax or go online with the 3c and have to keep my 3a/3Fax (which I needed to sell to part-finance the 3c) in order to do all this and it's very, very inconvenient! I had understood that the 'concept' behind the 3c was 'C' for 'Communicator'—it's about time they made it capable of communicating properly!"

(dagriffiths@cix.compulink.co.uk)

"The Psion at this point is a much sturdier machine than any of the CEs. But when applications for the CEs become common, and the second generation ones start coming out, then I don't see how Psion will survive. I see Psion declaring bankruptcy in less than two years. Just my opinion of course."

(71773.3571@compuserve.com)

"You're making a big assumption about the advances between the first two generations. I don't think CE can catch up that fast, even with Microsoft's muscle behind it. Remember, Psion already have ten years experience in the handheld market. I disagree with your conclusions, and I certainly hope you're wrong!"

(100024.704@compuserve.com)

Psion's long awaited new suite of Internet tools are a reality at last. Will we now be able to read the news in the Psion discussion areas from our palmtops?

"Can I really have the world in my pocket?"

"OK, I will buy it—I've been waiting long enough. So Mail and Web are covered. Now how do I get my news on the Psion? Can I now really have the world in my pocket?"

(Fairway@edprmk.demon.co.uk)

"Well, judging from Andrew Baldwin's response in an earlier message, there isn't a news reader in the suite! Apparently, they are confident that someone else will be enterprising enough to create their own, sounds like they're being a tad lazy and relying on the shareware scene a little too much to me."

(aw49@cityscape.co.uk)

Shareware writers put a lot of effort and hours into creating their programs and it's very rewarding when a professional used to working with other platforms has kind words to say about what's available for the Psion. It's even nicer when users take the trouble to register...

"Having had my Psion for a short time and only just started experimenting with installing shareware, I am truly astounded at the quality of programming around. I work as a programmer, and seeing what people have done with so little resources really is brilliant."

(jonbeckett@cix.compulink.co.uk)

"I hear so many people complaining about the fees, not enough shareware, yet according to many of the shareware authors that have e-mailed me recently, less than 5% of the downloads of their programs are ever registered! C'mon people! Cough up the few dollars so the authors are encouraged to keep writing software!"

(kenw@flash.net)

Passwords are always a subject of discussion. Many users don't know that without precautions, the machine's aren't as secure as you may think...

"I have my 3c password protected. I started a backup to my PC using PsiWin, and when it finished, I noticed that the 3c was sitting at the password prompt, but all my files were now on the PC—without entering a password. Ooops, there go all the corporate secrets! Beware!"

(steve@rwx777.demon.co.uk)

"For this hole to be open, you need to leave communications enabled. Not only is this a security problem, but it uses your batteries faster. I use *Pason 4c* on my Siena. Every 6 hours it will enable password, enable sounds and disable the communications link."

(russell.lang@bt-sys.bt.co.uk)

Those with a larger computer, such as a PC, need *PsiWin* to make the connection... but what about Apple Mac users?

"...I am truly astounded at the quality of programming around"

"In October, I bought a 3c after having a 3a for a couple of years. I'm generally happy, but after buying it, I was disgusted to find that the Macintosh Link keeps being delayed for release and I now cannot backup my Psion until at least January 1997. To add insult to injury, the software is going to be the old software, not upgraded like *PsiWin* and I'm now going to have to shell out £80 for a new (simpler cable) link for my 3c. I wrote to Psion, but they were no help at all. Are there any other disgruntled Mac and 3c owners out there who have managed to get hold of the link?"

(williasp@vax.sbu.ac.uk)

"Presumably, the 3c *PsiWin* cable has a 9-pin 'D' connector on the end. Don't you just need a DB-9-to-Mac adaptor cable? Then it's just a question of whether the old Mac link software will work with the 3c, which I don't know."

(boys@aspentech.com)

"You think it's bad for MacOS users? Try getting official Amiga-to-Psion backup software."

(stevieb@x-file.cix.co.uk)

And finally—one interesting thread on CompuServe listed some suggested names for the next Psion machine, starting with the Psion Quattro...but car manufacturer Audi got there first...

(continued over...)

"Don't you think the case would have to be bigger for the 'GLX Airbag' and the fluffy dice?"

(101603.661@compuserve.com)

"Psion Sage... (All seeing, all knowing) 2. Psion Gateway... (If my wish of a web-browser comes off) 3. Psion Mercury.... (Greek messenger) 4. Psion Tardis.... I'm sure all the 'Doctor Who' fans will agree—how do they get all that stuff inside...?"

(106026.3541@compuserve.com)

"How about the Psion Thatcher? A formidable machine with a battery that goes on, and on and on..."

(100726.3155@compuserve.com)

"How about the Psion Nomad, or Psion Wanderer, each name implying self sufficiency and mobility? Or what about Psion 'Soon'. Very soon..."

(106026.3541@compuserve.com)

Psion-related discussions take place in the comp.sys.psion.misc Usenet newsgroup, as well as the Psion conference on CiX, the Psion area on AOL, and the Palmtop A forum on CompuServe.

Pete Sipple.

MEETING!

There will be another informal meeting for Psion users in London:

Date: Monday 3rd March
Time: 6pm onwards
Place: The Albion Pub, 2-3 New Bridge Street, London EC4

It will be held in the upstairs function room of the pub. As before we have our own bar and hot food will be available.

Please e-mail Rick Andrews (rick@cix.compulink.co.uk) if you plan to attend.

WANTED

***2Mb Series 3a* and/or RAM SSD**

Contact: Nick Garner
tel: (01223) 411412 (day)
or (01223) 467967 (evenings)
fax: (01223) 411013

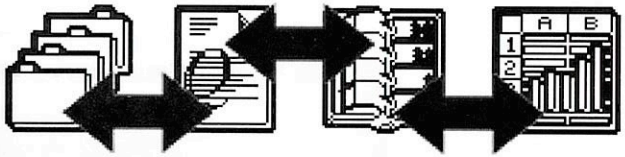
Stock taking application wanted for the Series 3a/3c. Someone out there must have written one, but I can't find any!

Contact: 'Ozzie'
tel: (0181) 7813007 (daytime)
or (0181) 569225 (evenings)
e-mail: ozzie.h-o@dial.pipex.com

MOVE it, MOVE it!

Moving data between your Psion applications can often be useful. We show you how to do it

by Steve Clack



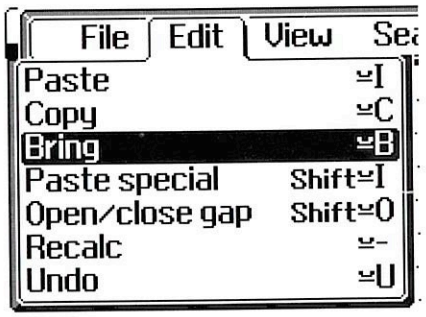
Choosing which Psion application to store your information in is often as plain as the nose on your face, but at other times things are not so clear cut. Nobody would choose to write a letter in the spreadsheet or keep a database on the word processor, but there are often more subtle factors to consider when selecting a home for your information, and there are reasons why you may want to ferry parts of your data from place to place on your Psion computer.

In this article we'll look at how to move things around with ease, and examine some of the reasons why you would want to do exactly that.

From anywhere to anywhere

Completely unknown to some Psion users, the useful 'Bring' function can be used to pull blocks of text from almost anywhere on your Psion to anywhere else. Variously labelled as 'Bring', 'Bring entry', 'Bring number' or 'Bring text' depending on the software you are using at the time, it is nothing more than a universal clipboard. Highlight something in one of your Psion applications, then move to another application, press <Psion><B>, and whatever you had highlighted will be instantly dumped at the current cursor position. Here are the rules that govern its use:

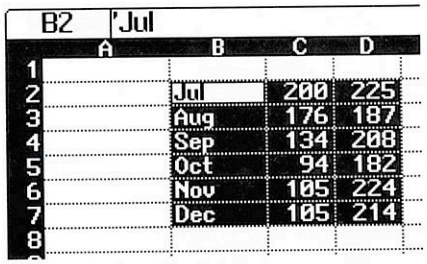
- To select something to 'Bring', you must *highlight the exact text you wish to copy* if you are copying from the word processor. Use the <Shift>



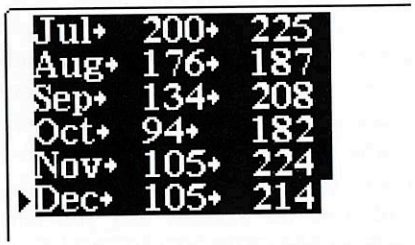
The ubiquitous 'Bring'

and arrow keys to select your text in the usual way.

- You can copy text from database records. If the cursor is in the 'Find' window at the bottom of the screen you will need to press <Tab> first to move it into the main data window, then use the <Shift> and arrow keys to highlight the text you want to copy. You can only select *whole* lines in this way, but there's no danger of accidentally editing the record you are in. If you insist on clipping out precise blocks of text you can do it by going into 'Change' mode on a 3a or 'Edit' mode on a 3c or Siena—just use the diamond key to get there from 'Find' mode. If you do this then be careful not to cut or edit the text you are highlighting.
- If you are copying from the AGENDA you can press <Enter> to go into an entry, then move around and select an exact piece of text, or if you want to copy an entire entry you only need to move the cursor to the bullet point to the left of the entry—it will bring the whole thing.
- You can use the 'Bring' function to transfer text to or from the memo feature within the AGENDA, in the same way as the word processor.
- To 'Bring' from the spreadsheet, highlight the rectangular matrix of cells that you want to copy. When you 'Bring' the text in, each column break will appear as a <Tab> character (see below).



Highlighted and ready to go



The same data, brought into WORD

- You can 'Bring' text from any application into the Series 3a/3c spell checker in order to look up a word without having to retype it.
- You can't 'Bring' numbers into the Series 3/3a calculator, but you can with the Series 3c or Siena.

- 'Bring' will only work on the last item you highlighted. If you go into another application and highlight a second block of text, that will always become the new text to 'Bring'.
- 'Bring' will not work if you close the application or document containing the text you want to 'Bring'. You must either use one of the softkeys above the keyboard to go to the new application, or press the <System> button and open the application from the system screen.
- You cannot 'Bring' more than one block of text at a time, as there is no way to highlight one block without deselecting the first.

If you take note of these rules and limitations you will find the 'Bring' function a useful tool in a variety of situations.

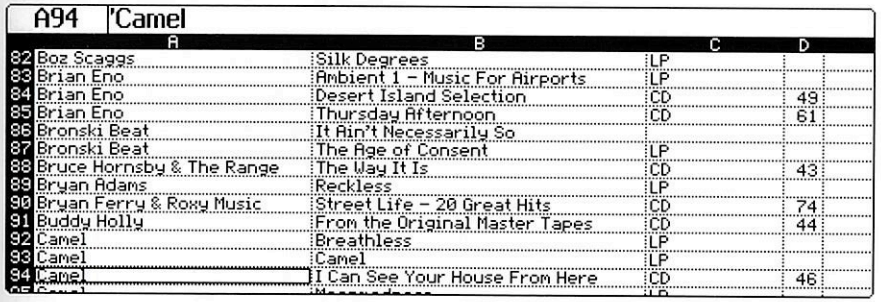
But why?

Why would you want to move data from one application to another? Well, the neat 'tabbing' of spreadsheet data means that you can easily insert part or all of a worksheet into the middle of a letter, you can paste notes from a WORD file into an AGENDA entry or an attached memo, or paste any of your notes from other applications into a free-form database for use as a simple flashcard type reference system.

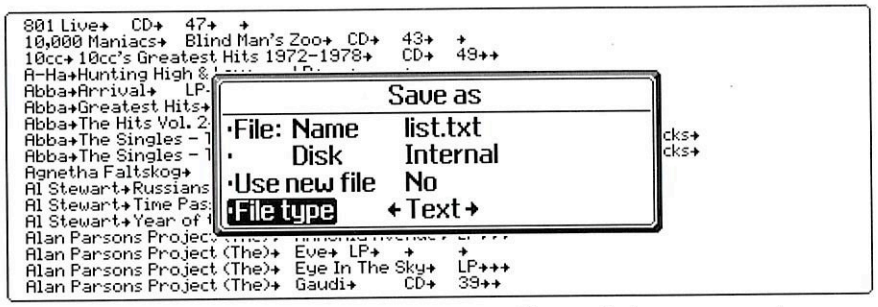
The 3c JOTTER application is a particularly good candidate for the 'Bring' function. The unstructured nature of the JOTTER makes it an excellent repository for all those scraps of information that you haven't found a home for yet. If you subsequently find somewhere the data should permanently live—like in a database record, or as part of another document—then simply 'Bring' it in and delete the original from the JOTTER.

Move it!

There are other reasons to move data. You may initially decide to keep track of your record collection in a spreadsheet, for instance. This is quite manageable for small collections, as you can easily move around, edit and examine all of


A94 'Camel
A B C D
82 Boz Scaggs Silk Degrees LP
83 Brian Eno Ambient 1 - Music For Airports LP
84 Brian Eno Desert Island Selection CD 49
85 Brian Eno Thursday Afternoon CD 61
86 Bronski Beat It Ain't Necessarily So
87 Bronski Beat The Age of Consent LP
88 Bruce Hornsby & The Range The Way It Is CD 43
89 Bryan Adams Reckless LP
90 Bryan Ferry & Roxy Music Street Life - 20 Great Hits CD 74
91 Buddy Holly From the Original Master Tapes CD 44
92 Camel Breathless LP
93 Camel Camel LP
94 Camel I Can See Your House From Here CD 46

A SHEET full of data, ready to export



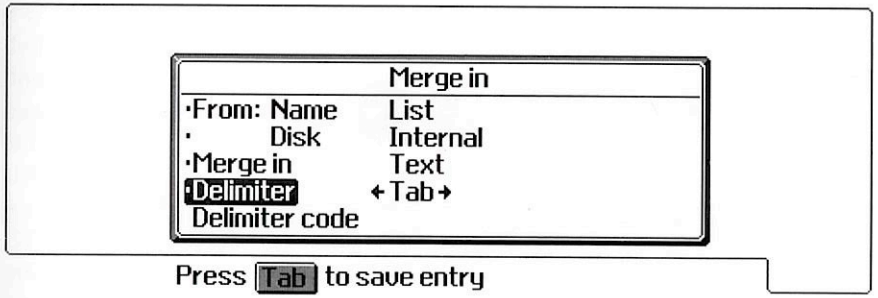
The data after 'Bring'ing it into a WORD file, ready for export again

your data without paging through lots of database records. Spreadsheets also have the advantage that you can use the mathematical functions to create sums, averages, subtotals and so on.

But what if your spreadsheet becomes too big? There is a data file size limit of around 40K for WORD and SHEET files, so if your collection becomes large you'll either need to split it into more than one sheet, or move it into a database, where no such file size limit exists.

As luck would have it, moving data from a Psion spreadsheet to a Psion database is particularly easy, and here's how to do it. Of course you could do it using the conversion facilities of PsiWin, but this method works perfectly without needing another computer:

1. You can't move the data straight from the spreadsheet into the database, the formats aren't compatible—we have to get it into a WORD file first. The first step is to highlight ALL of the cells with data in (but don't include the empty cells below and to the right of your data).
2. Next, and without closing the spreadsheet you were in, open up a new and empty WORD file and select the 'Bring' command. This neatly dumps the entire spreadsheet into the WORD file, with each column break in the spreadsheet conveniently converted into a <Tab> character (see screen shot above).
3. The Psion database will readily accept data in this so-called 'tab delimited' format, so the next step is to save the WORD file correctly before transferring everything into DATA. You *must not* just save it in the normal way, as Psion's proprietary 'WRD' format adds a header to the beginning of the file containing information on the formatting used, font details, etc., and this will spoil the import. Instead, save the file as shown above, using any file name, but being sure to set the 'File type' as 'Text', and to keep things tidy give it a .TXT extension to the file name. You can then exit the WORD file
4. Next create a new and empty database file, ready to accept your data.



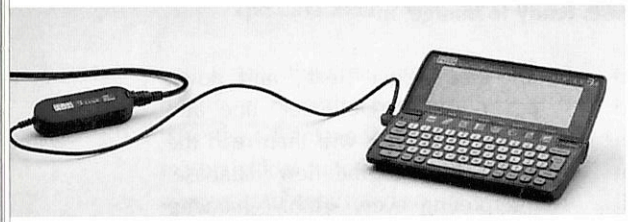
In an empty database, ready to 'merge' in

At this point you may like to go into the 'Edit Labels' menu option and change the database labels to match the incoming data. Remember that each line from your spreadsheet will form a separate record, and each column of the spreadsheet should correspond to a different field label. Alternatively, if you are working with simple free-form data you may prefer to delete the data labels entirely. Note that 3c/Siena 'List' view will not work without field labels, and neither will sorting.

5. With your empty database ready, select the 'Merge in' option from the 'File' menu, and fill out the dialog box that appears (see screen shot above). When selecting 'From: Name' remember that you're not looking for a DATA file in the \DAT\ directory, but a .TXT file, which will have been saved into the \WRD\ directory by default. You'll therefore need to press the <Tab> key while on this line, and traverse around the directories to find the file. Once you have it, move down to the 'Merge in' line and select 'Text', and down again to the 'Delimiter' line and select 'Tab'. This will then read the plain text into the new database, interpreting every <Tab> character as an instruction to put the next item into another field of the database, and the break at the end of each line as an instruction to start an entirely new record of the database. Just press the <Enter> key when you have followed the above instructions, and the data will be imported perfectly into your database.
6. Finally, press <Tab> to save the data you have imported, you can then browse through your new records. The number of records should of course match the number of lines you had in the original spreadsheet, minus any blank ones, or ones used for the column headings.

We'll be continuing this article in the next issue of *Palmtop*, where we'll look into a few other useful data type conversions, and into the best file formats to use when transferring data to and from other computers.

The Mac connection



Steve Clack explains how to connect your Psion computer to an Apple Macintosh, and how to exchange data successfully

Although Apple Macintosh users now account for less than 10% of the desktop computer market it's still many millions of people, and as a Psion employee told me at a recent press launch—statistics report that Mac users are 3-4 times more likely to buy a Psion than PC users. I can't vouch for the accuracy of that last statement or the true reasons behind it, but it's a sure fact that Psion's blinkered approach to the non-PC marketplace is causing frustration for a great number of their customers, be they Mac users, Atari users, Amiga users or whatever. Those of us without PCs are treated very much as the poor relations when hooking up to our Psions.

This article will help all Mac users to make the best of what's available...

Where to start?

If you own a Series 3 or 3a then you are in a reasonable position. You can buy a copy of Psion's *Macintosh Link*, which includes a *PsiWin*-like cable (terminated in a 8-pin circular Mac serial adaptor, of course) and the 'latest' (4 year old) Mac Software. This package is now sold as the 'Plus Edition', which includes two software solutions: the older MCLINK (originally written for Psion's now-defunct MC range of laptop computers) and the newer PSION LINK software.

If you have a Series 3c or Siena then you are currently stranded in limbo. Psion have promised to produce a new *Macintosh Link* package with the new-style connector, but it has not yet materialised. It may be available by the time you read this article, but as with most of Psion's promises in this area I wouldn't hold your breath in anticipation for too long. Even when the new package does arrive it will still use the same old software they've been supplying since 1993. PSION LINK has always supported communications at 57,600bps, so no changes need to be made to support the faster 3c communications.

For what it's worth, certain Psion officials have stated that an improved version of the Macintosh communications software *is* planned, but as of late 1996 it had no firm release date, and not even an internal project number within the Company. Those looking for the fabled *PsiMac* package are well advised to grit their teeth and instead get to grips with what's available now.

Over the following pages I'll go through all the connection options in sequence, talk a little about what they have to offer, and about how to work around their limitations:

Hooking up

Putting the software issue aside for a moment, the hardware connection can be a problem in itself.

3a owners need do nothing more than buy the *Macintosh Link* package, join the two halves of the cable together, plug one end into the Psion and the other into either the printer or modem port of their Mac.

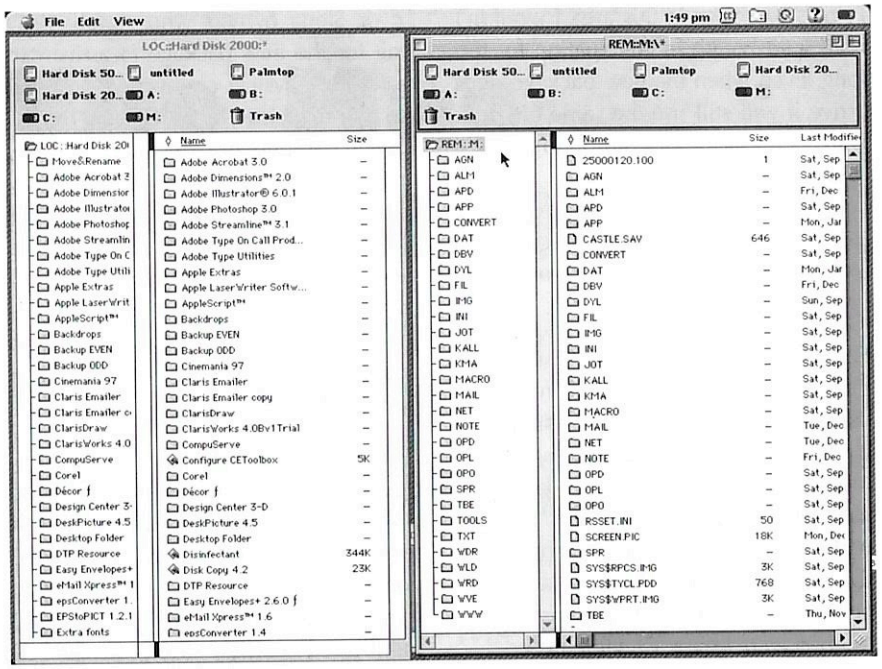
3c or Siena owners who simply can't wait for the new package to arrive can make the physical connection between the two machines by purchasing the PC *PsiWin* package. Just ditch the software, buy an adaptor to go between the 9-way female D-connector on the *PsiWin* cable and the Macintosh 8-way female Geoport socket. To get my 3c running I managed to hook the two machines together with a couple of old cables and adaptors I had lying around in a cupboard.

Apart from being an expensive solution, buying a PsiWin package is of little use if you don't already have the Macintosh software, but if you have just traded your 3a in for a 3c or Siena then you may already have the software, and as I mentioned earlier, the software is unchanged.

If you need to connect a 3c or Siena and don't already have the *Macintosh Link* software then there's another option: the PC *PsiWin* program will work under either SoftWindows 3.0 (I haven't tried earlier versions, or SoftWindows 95), or if you have a Mac running a PC compatibility card. Depending on the PC-card type you may still need to adapt the cable as I mentioned above, but at least you'll have some reasonable software to use.

The soft options

Once you have made the connections to your Mac, here is a summary of all the



PSION LINK, not such a shabby piece of software after all!

(realistic) software options you can consider:

Psion Link

Released after MCLINK as a more sophisticated and friendly alternative, PSION LINK may not offer the file conversion facilities or TrueType font usage of the PC-based *PsiWin*, but is otherwise an entirely usable package. I have the option to use *PsiWin* under a virtual PC on my own Macs, but I still prefer to stay inside the Macintosh environment and use PSION LINK instead.

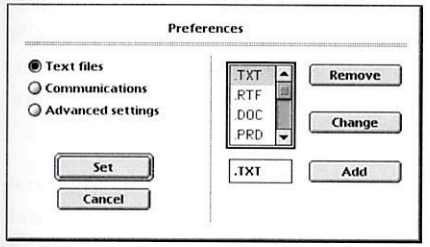
As with MCLINK, PSION LINK does not involve installing any software onto your Psion. You are only required to follow the Macintosh installation instructions from the documentation.

To give instant access to either program you can move the program (or an alias of it) to the *Launcher* or the *Apple Menu Items* folder.

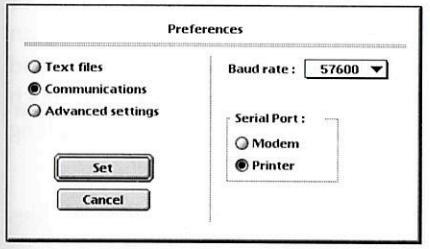
Setup is normally straightforward, but here are a few points to note when configuring the program:

Before connecting your Psion for the first time, run PSION LINK and go into the 'Preferences' section under the 'File' menu. There are three sections within

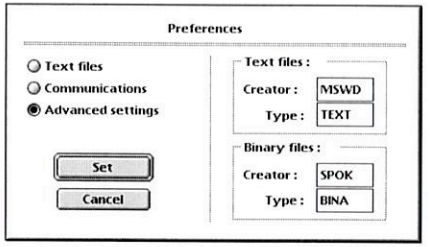
the dialog box that appears: 'Text Files', 'Communications' and 'Advanced Settings'.



► The 'Text Files' option allows you to specify those Psion file extensions (such as TXT, RTF, OPL, WRD, etc.) that correspond to text files rather than 'binary' files. If you need to change any of these then just follow the manual, but 99% of users don't need to change anything. Files set up in this way can be opened within any text processor on your Mac, although they may sometimes contain additional control characters.



► The 'Communications' dialog allows you to set the correct Baud (bps) rate for file transfers, and to select either the modem or printer port for communications. These items must be set correctly in order for anything to function, and note that you cannot set a baud rate faster than your particular Psion is capable of and hope that the software will just 'change gear' automatically to suit—it won't. This is a bit of a pain if you plan to connect more than one type of Psion to your Mac, as you will have to go in and manually change the baud rate every time you go from a 57,600 baud 3c to a 19,200 baud Siena, for instance. If you habitually



use more than one type of Psion with PSION LINK you can get around the problem by running two (or more) copies of the program, one configured at each baud rate. Just make a copy of the entire folder full of PSION LINK-related files and re-name it, then re-name one of the two 'Psion Link' executable files to something like 'Siena Link' or '3c Link'. You can even install the renamed copy of the program into the *Launcher* or the *Apple Menu*.

► The 'Advanced Settings' box allows you to have certain file types recognised automatically, so that when you double-click on a file's icon on

your Mac it will automatically be recognised and launched. As PSION LINK doesn't perform any proper file conversions by itself this option is not terribly useful. If you save your WORD files into plain TEXT or RTF format it can be handy though: just type in a four letter creator code for the word processor you use on your Mac, and enter TEXT into the 'Type' box (see previous page). For example, if you use Microsoft Word on your Mac then type MSWD as shown, and then you can just transfer Psion WORD files to your Mac in plain text or RTF format and they will be opened automatically whenever you double-click the icon. If you use ClarisWorks for your word processing then type in MWII instead of MSWD, so Works will open the text files instead.

The use of these four-letter codes may sound complicated, but they are the same as those used by the *PC Exchange* software included with System 7 and above, so you can read about them in the PC Exchange documentation.

There's no need to change the 'Binary Files' settings, as no Mac software is currently capable of reading any of the other file formats produced by the Psion.

Once you have done your configuration just switch off your Macintosh and Psion, connect the cables, re-start both machines, start the link software on the Psion at the maximum baud rate using <Psion><L> from the system screen, and then launch PSION LINK.

The cursor on your Mac should spin for a few seconds while it checks the presence of the Psion computer, after which it should give a tuneful chime, and then display a single window showing your current Mac drive.

The top section of the window will show not only the hard disk of your own local Macintosh, but any other mounted drives such as floppies, networked Macs, external Zip, Jaz, Syquest drives, etc. Double-clicking on any of the drive icons will open another window for that drive, and you can open as many resizable windows as you wish at any time.

To transfer files between Macintosh and Psion in either direction simply click and hold on the file you want to copy then drag and drop it to wherever you want it to go. You can choose to move files rather than copy them by holding down the <option> key while dragging, and you can select multiple files or folders (directories) by shift-clicking on each one in turn. Opening folders and traversing the interface works very much like the Mac's own *Finder*, so everything should appear quite familiar.

Note that you can also transfer files between drives on the same computer, simply by dragging between the appropriate windows.

To delete files, drag them to the Trash icon in the top section of any window.

Limitations of Psion Link

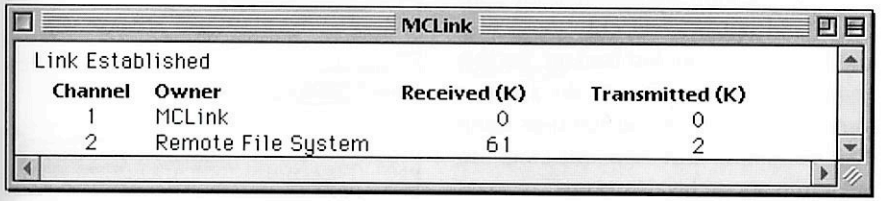
So far the PSION LINK software seems quite usable, so what are its limitations?

- It offers no automatic file conversions, so when you save a file on your Psion you cannot open and read it directly on your Mac, or vice versa. We'll cover how to get around this later in the article.
- It offers no automatic backup facility. To perform a backup you have to create a folder for it on your Macintosh, then drag-and-drop the entire Psion 'drive' to the empty folder. The screen shot on page 80 shows the entire internal drive of a Psion computer (labelled REM::M:) highlighted and ready to drag to an empty folder on a Mac drive. Note that you can easily create an empty folder by pressing <command><N> from within PSION LINK. There is no easy way to perform a selective backup of files modified since a certain date, and each drive must be backed up separately by dragging as described above.
- You cannot print from your Psion *through* your Macintosh, as *PsiWin* can using *Psion Print*. Neither can you use external TrueType fonts when printing.
- You can't automatically compress unused space on a flash or RAM SSD, or rename a Psion drive from your Macintosh.
- Unlike *PsiWin*, PSION LINK has no facility to manipulate Psion DATA files on your desktop computer.

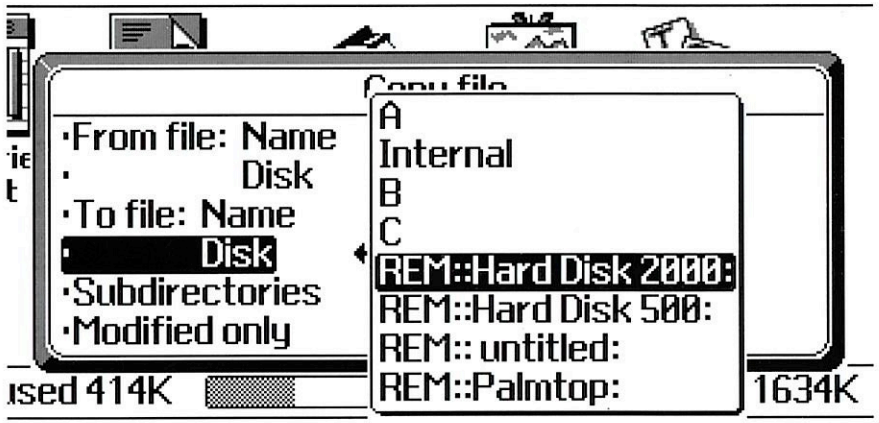
MCLINK

This has been supplied with all versions of the *Macintosh Link* since the beginning. It is rather crude and once the connection has been made it only allows control from the Psion end. It is very easy to setup and run though: just follow the installation instructions given in the documentation, switch the link on at the Psion end, and launch MCLink.

The only menu options are to set the transfer rate and the Mac communication port to use. Always set the maximum transfer rate possible: that's 9,200 baud (bps) for the Series 3 Classic, and 19,600 baud for anything else. MCLINK will not support the 57,600 baud rate of the 3c, but you can



MCLINK—very basic, but can be useful



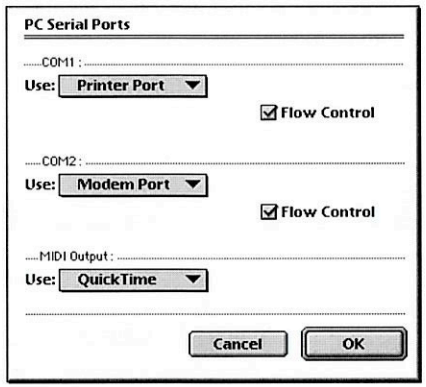
Transferring files with MCLINK running

still transfer data just fine at the lower speed—just set a matching speed when you fire up the link on your 3c. The MCLINK window on your Mac only indicates whether the link is established, and shows the number of kilobytes transferred.

With MCLINK running, all of your Macintosh drives will appear within the Psion's built-in file selector (see the screen shot above), or any third party file manager you may have installed. This is generally far less convenient than using PSION LINK, where you can see everything on your nice big Mac screen, but MCLINK has one distinct advantage: you can perform a backup from your Psion and opt to copy only those files modified since your last backup. For this reason you may prefer to do all your general file copying and transfers using PSION LINK, but use MCLINK to perform your archival backups.

The PC solution

Many Mac users will cringe at the thought of this, but running *PsiWin* under SoftWindows does give you almost all the benefits enjoyed by PC owners. The only caveats are that SoftWindows will only support transfer speeds up to 19,200bps, and the *Psion Print* facility refuses to work at all. When



Setting up SoftWindows

setting up to run PsiWin be sure to select the correct serial port from the 'PC Serial Ports' menu option.

I have also run *PsiWin* from the DOS compatibility card on a Power Macintosh 6100, though again it refuses to connect at speeds above 19,200bps, and *Psion Print* still won't work.

A final point worth mentioning about these options is that they will both allow you to run the Psion *Emulator* too. You must stay in MS-DOS rather than Windows (as you must on a PC), but the program functions fine in both cases.

Converting files

Without the file conversion capabilities of *PsiWin*, the Mac user is left to do it all manually. Here are a few guidelines:

- To export Psion database files, save them as delimited text, and then import them into your Mac database. Filemaker Pro and 4th Dimension will accept tab-delimited or comma delimited files directly, but ClarisWorks makes life difficult, refusing to import anything other than raw text or DIF format. The only way around this is to save your file in a program that will write to DIF format (like Microsoft Excel), and then translate back into ClarisWorks.
- For Psion WORD files, save them as RTF format, which almost every Mac word processor can read. This will even preserve your style sheets.
- Convert spreadsheets into WK1 (or WKS) format for import into Excel, but ClarisWorks only offers DIF import, which doesn't preserve your calculations.
- Agenda files cannot be converted to or from Psion format. The best you can do is to print your AGENDA to a text file, and open it to read within a word processor—not satisfactory.
- Psion PIC files can be converted to BMP, PCX or GIF format using a Psion drawing package or convertor, or using the excellent Mac shareware *GraphicConverter*, which reads Psion PIC files directly.
- Psion sound files cannot be converted, nor can ACT! files.

Printing from Mac printers

Macintosh printers are generally not equipped with parallel (Centronics) printer ports, so you will have to use serial communications via the Psion *Macintosh Link* (or *PsiWin*) cable.

The only Mac printer supported directly by the Psions is the Apple LaserWriter. They also work with generic Postscript printers, which covers almost all Apple laser printers. Don't expect to connect a StyleWriter to your Psion though: they don't work.

Some of the networkable LaserWriters are now supplied with a parallel port too, so you can use these with the cheaper *Parallel Link* cable from Psion.

Hints & Tips

Here are some useful tips to get the most out of your trusty Psion. Robert Killington wins a six-month extension to his subscription for his 'dating' tips below...

Pasting in today's date

I have been looking for a way of inserting today's date in word documents without having to type it out every time. I'm lazy like that, and I blame it on PC-based word processors. I already know about using %D in the header or footer of a WORD document, but I want the date in the body of the document, or perhaps on the last line. I have not seen any suggestions for how this can be done.

I have recently realised that it is possible. The way I have done it is to set up a spreadsheet called DATE, and in a cell put the formula `=NOW`. Using <Psion><M> I formatted the cell to show the result in date format. Leaving the cell highlighted means that when I need today's date in a document I call up the spreadsheet, revert to WORD and use the 'Bring' function, <Psion><B>. This does mean that you have to recalculate the spreadsheet each day, but that seems a small price to pay for the convenience of having the date to hand for semi-automatic inclusion in a document.

Robert Killington
Crawley, West Sussex

Accessing special characters

Can't remember how to access all those special accented characters and symbols that aren't shown on the keyboard? To aid my memory I have made up a WORD document called 'Keycaps' (after the Macintosh utility of similar purpose) which displays all symbols and the keys used to access them, organised in convenient groupings. I keep Keycaps open, especially when working on another WORD document, so I can take a quick look when I need to. If I am working on a document with many special symbols, I print out a copy of Keycaps to refer to without having to switch documents. Unless otherwise marked, symbols are accessed by pressing and holding down the <Control> key while typing in the correct three digit number. Other characters are accessed by pressing the <Control> key and the specified number key together, then release these keys and *then* enter the specified letter.

Ken Solomon
Morro Bay CA, U.S.A.

	ACCENTS		SPECIAL
äëïöüÿ	Control-2 + aeiouy	âçðæøþ	Control-1 + acdeot
ÄËÏÖÜ	Control-2 + AEIOU	ÂÇÐÆØÞ	Control-1 + ACDEOT
àèìòù	Control-3 + aeiou	ß £	Control-1 + s p
ÀÈÌÒÙ	Control-3 + AEIOU	« »	Control-1 + l r
áéíóúý	Control-4 + aeiouy	¿ ¡	Control-1 + q x
ÁÉÍÓÚÝ	Control-4 + AEIOUY		
ãõñ	Control-5 + aon		BULLETS
ÃÕÑ	Control-5 + AON	· ▪	250, 254, 219
âêîôû	Control-6 + aeiou	▒ ▓ ▦ ■	176, 177, 178, 219
ÂÊÎÔÛ	Control-6 + AEIOU		
	SYMBOLS		FILL SYMBOLS
× ÷ ±	158, 246, 241	▒ ▓ ▦	176, 177, 178
« »	174, 175	■ ▄ ▬	219, 220, 223
ƒ §	159, 245		
ª º	166, 167		LITTLE NUMBERS
µ ó	230, 224		
¦ ¦	124, 221	½ ¼ ¾	171, 172, 243
® ©	169, 184	° ı	248, 213
¢ ¥	189, 190	° 1 2 3	248, 251, 253, 252
¶ §	244, 245		
¨ · ▪ ¸ ¯ _ ´	247, 249, 250, 254 238, 240, 239		BOXES
	BOXES	┌ ┬ ┐	218, 194, 191
		├ ┼ ┤	195, 197, 180
╔ ╦ ╗	201, 203, 187	└ ┴ ┘	192, 193, 217
╠ ╬ ╣	204, 206, 185	− |	196, 179
╚ ╩ ╝	200, 202, 188		
= ‖	205, 186		

Create a document similar to this, an easy ready-reference

Using old Series 3 programs on a Siena

Many Siena owners may not be aware that most applications written for the 'Series 3 Classic' (the precursor to the Series 3a/3c) will run on the Siena. Programs like the Berlitz Interpreter, Hugh Johnson's Wine Guide, etc. all run without problems. The Series 3 screen was 240 x 80 pixels whereas the Siena screen is 240 x 160 pixels. They therefore run in a sort of 'wide screen' mode on the Siena.

A Siena in 'Letterbox' mode!

If you are a Siena owner and know someone with a 3c then you can most easily transfer Series 3 files from the 3c to the Siena using infrared.

Graham Lambert
Technical Manager, Widget Software

Exceeding the limit

Many users will have seen the message 'Cannot Install (Limit is 50 applications)'. There are programs available to get around this **(see *JBLaunch* and *Xfile* reviews in issue 6 - Ed.)**, but I have a solution that creates an icon on the system screen with a list of *all* applications below it. It also leaves out groups and aliases, which makes it easier to find your applications. You can also delete or copy applications more quickly, since there is no need to press the <Tab> key, select the \APP\ directory then look for the file.

In the system screen, go to the 'RunOpl' application (use <Psion><J> to install it if it is not already there) and then go to the 'special' menu and select 'Create new list'. This will bring up a dialog asking a few questions. Fill in the spaces as shown below:

Directory for files: \APP\

Extension for files: OPA

Icon: (press tab and select your own icon if you have created one)

Save as: (give a suitable name)

Disk: Internal (or an SSD if you prefer)

Setting up your lists under the RunOpl icon

Some applications have an extension of 'APP': repeat the above method, replacing the 'OPA' with 'APP' in order to create another list.

You will now see a text-only list of all your applications in alphabetical order under the icons you have just created. Just press the first letter of the program name to go to the first item in the list and use the arrow keys to move around from there.

Paul Synott
Larne, Northern Ireland

Another route to faster backups

Reading about long backup times and about people using the *PsiWin* software, I thought that many users may be unaware of the older RCOM software, which I still use regularly—even though I like *PsiWin* for copying files, etc.

Each week when I backup my Psion, I have found *PsiWin* to be a little bit 'too much'. I think RCOM does this more easily, and despite being DOS-only, RCOM is still shipped together with the *3Link* and *PsiWin*, so all *Psiwin* users have access to it.

When I backup my 3a to my PC, I do the following:

- Connect the serial link.
- Run JBSTOPGO (this shareware program starts the link software and closes all running applications automatically. JBSTOPGO is available from all major shareware sources, but if you don't have it then you can of course start the link and close down applications manually).
- Click an OS/2 icon (or run a batch file from DOS).

This executes a batch file that takes an incremental backup of all disks.

Wait until the backup is finished, then:

- Run JBSTOPGO again, or manually restart your programs and close the link.
- Disconnect the link.

All this just takes a couple of minutes, depending on how many files that were changed since last backup.

I find this much easier than entering *PsiWin* and ordering *PsiWin* backup. And, above all, I know it is always done in the same way.

A sample DOS batch file can be found in the RCOM directory on the *3Link* diskette.

Nils Abrahamsson
Göteborg, Sweden

Murgan's Musings

Palmtop computers, Organisers and PDAs. Stephen Murgan gives his own impressions of what they are, and offers a few useful tricks into the bargain!

The Series 3 range of machines are rather difficult to categorise. To call them 'organisers' lumps them in with much less capable (and cheaper) machines, and to be honest, is somewhat demeaning.

The term 'PDA' (Personal Digital Assistant) is often applied to them, but it doesn't quite fit. My definition of a PDA is a device that performs the duties of a secretary or assistant: arranging appointments and meetings, reminding the boss about important things, communicating with others on the Boss's behalf. Certainly the Psion Series 3 can do this, but it can also do a whole lot more.

Unlike most PDAs, it is possible to write your own programs on a Psion: either in the built-in OPL language, or externally, in C (and now OVAL), so calling it a computer would not be inaccurate, although the problem here is that the word 'computer' conjures up negative images. It is perhaps more accurate to label the machine in terms of its functions: computer, organiser, notepad, spreadsheet, alarm clock, calculator... there are very few aspects of modern life where the Psion cannot be put to good use. With tongue firmly in cheek I can safely say that the term 'Personal Computer' can much more easily be applied to this little wonder than to the lump sitting on my desk.

One of the nice things about the Series 3 range is that using them does not require too much by way of technical knowledge. It only takes a few hours to learn the basics, and the built-in help system—which could be a lot better, in my opinion—provides most of the information a new user needs to get up and running. The manual, while well-written and readable, doesn't need to be used very often, which means that these machines can be used by people in all walks of life, from farmers to pilots to businesspeople to lawyers. This is a testament to the excellent design. There is also a surprisingly broad base of good software out there, much of it written by enthusiasts rather than corporations, and of generally high quality. Certainly, there is room for improvement—the Psions are not perfect, and cannot possibly be all things to all people—but being able to provide 90% of users with 90% of the required functionality for 90% of the time is no mean feat.

With a little imagination, it is possible to do some rather unusual things with your Psion (don't titter), and in this article I will be looking at some of the more offbeat things that I have been doing with mine.

The Database

It is no secret that the database layout can be altered, adding new fields. I have added placeholders for fax numbers, mobile phone numbers and e-mail addresses. This does, of course, involve messing around with the data, but there's really nothing to it. Just export the existing data, edit it to fit the new layout and merge it back in. If you have a large amount of data it can be laborious, so it is better to do it early on, before the database gets too big.

Although the database is most commonly used as an address book, there is no reason why it needs to be restricted to this function. For example, in the PALMTOP forum on CompuServe it is possible to lay your hands on a database file containing historic and planned launches of the space shuttle (including the tragic 51L), and another one containing various *emoticons* (combinations of textual characters used to symbolise expressions, the most renowned of which is the smiley).

The Word Processor

Perhaps the least-used but most useful feature of the Psion word processor is the *outliner*. In fact, I used my machine for several months before I finally figured out how to use this function. Once you have found it, however, it will become seriously useful. For starters, it can be used as an interactive contents page, allowing you to quickly skip to any point in a large document and then 'expand' the heading out into chunks of prose.

This ability to sub-divide a document into different areas has led to another idea. I have set up a special document which contains semi-static information, such as movies, videos and books that catch my interest, amusing quotes, web pages I would like to visit someday (saving the document to my PC in text format means never having to retype this information) and all sorts of other infor-

```
▸[TOP]
 Computer Tasks
 Books
 Movies
 Videos
 Music
 Quotes
 You cannot be serious...
 Phone Charges
 WWW Pages
 Collective Nouns
 [END]
```

Outline View—see the relevant section of your Psion User Guide

```
                    Quotes
Stress - the condition bought about by having to resist the
temptation to beat the living daylights out of someone who
▸desperately needs it.

Kirk: "Very funny, Scotty - now beam down my clothes"

Churchill: "A preposition at the end of a sentence is something up
with I will not put."
                    You cannot be serious...
100% Natural
...Guaranteed!
```

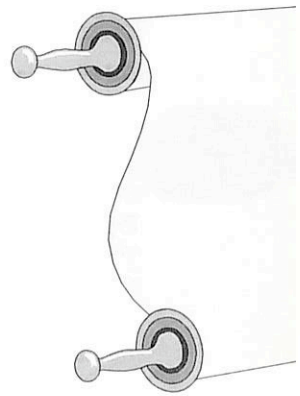
...and the details

mation that simply doesn't belong anywhere else.

I work as a consultant programmer, and I usually keep my project notes in a document, with a 'Diary' entry for each day, and separate issues for Issues, TBDs, etc. This helps me stay on top of things and stay focused on whatever it is I am supposed to be doing. Again, the headings are available in outline view.

In the next issue I will be looking at some unusual offbeat spreadsheet applications—see you then.

The Psion Reference



If you would like to be included in this ever-expanding directory then please send details directly to *Palmtop* for free inclusion. If your entry is incomplete or incorrect then please update us!

Discussion Groups

UseNet Groups

comp.sys.psion.announce	*comp.sys.psion.apps*	*comp.sys.psion.marketplace*
comp.sys.psion.misc	*comp.sys.psion.programmer*	*comp.sys.psion.reviews*

CompuServe Psion discussion	Palmtop A
CiX Psion conference	Psion
Palmtop Magazine discussion	palmtop_mag conference
AOL - Psion Noticeboard	Psion/General noticeboard - Keyword: Psion

Psion Software

Imperial Archive FTP Site	*ftp://src.doc.ic.ac.uk/packages/psion/icdoc/*
Frontiernet FTP Site	*ftp://ftp.frontiernet.net/pub/psion*
New World Technology FTP Site	*ftp://ftp.nwt.com/*
Cityscape Psion Archive	*ftp://ftp.cityscape.co.uk /pub/psion/*

Usenet Binary Group	*comp.binaries.psion*
CompuServe Psion files area	*Palmtop A* forum
CiX Psion files area	*/files* topic of the Psion conference

Psion FAQ

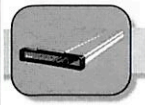
The Frequently Asked Questions document contains useful information, facts, names, addresses and numbers:

Posted monthly to the *comp.sys.psion.announce* newsgroup.

Available for FTP download from *news.answers* FTP sites, including rtfm.mit.edu/pub/usenet/news.answers/psion-faq/

An online version can be accessed from: http://www.geocities.com/SiliconValley/8130/faq.htm

Available by e-mail. Send an e-mail message to mail-server@rtfm.mit.edu with a message containing the lines "send usenet/news.answers/psion-faq/*" to receive all parts or send a message containing "help" and "index" for more information.



Bulletin Boards

Datalink BBS (UK)	+44 (0)1202 660 838 (currently offline for a while)
User Group (UK)	+44 (0)1752 894422
Lonely Times (Germany)	+49 911 393 9034
User Group (The Netherlands)	+31 515 574188
Belgian Psion BBS	+32 3 2262079

Surfers! The World Wide Web addresses previously published in this section have now been moved to our own WWW site. Those readers with Web access can find everything directly via our hotlinks, and those readers without Web access no longer need to read through redundant information in *Palmtop*! Our frequently updated pages also contain details of the contents of the next issue, plus pointers to the software reviewed in Palmtop Magazine. Stay in touch with what's new between issues at the Palmtop Magazine Website:

http://members.aol.com/palmtop

The Software Directory

This is the first edition of our new software directory. Here we intend to list the most popular software packages used for common applications. The listing includes both commercial and shareware/freeware packages.

There are currently well over 1000 software packages available for the Psion computers, and space does not permit us to cover the entire range!

Machine key: 3=Series 3, a=Series 3a, c=Series 3c, S=Siena

Communications software

Name	*Notes*	*File Name*	*Version*	*Size*	*Machine*	*Author*
Faxit	Fax sender	FAXIT14.ZIP	1.4	28k	a/c	W Wright
FreeVT	VT100 terminal emulator	FREEVT04.ZIP	0.4	19k	a/c	N Faerber
JBCIS	Add-on to ReadCIS	JBCIS10.ZIP	1.2.1a	48k	a/c	J Boyce
ReadCIS	CompuServe comms	READCIS.ZIP	1.7.5	93k	a/c	D Keppler
ReadCIX	CIX comms package	READ49C.ZIP	4.9	109k	a/c	D Keppler
Termit	VT100 terminal emulator	TERMIT.ZIP	1.1	25k	a/c	S Shestopalov
Websurf	Offline HTML browser	WEBSRF15.ZIP	1.5	40k	a/c	A Weil

Conversion programs

Conversion Calc.		CON3A.ZIP	6.1c	103k	a/c	T Bentinck
Convert		CONVER3A.ZIP	1.3	14k	a/c	P Synnott
Convert		CONVERT3.ZIP	1.3	14k	3	P Synnott
Convert 2.1		CNV21.ZIP	2.1	27k	a/c	T Nemec
ConVert		CNVT2-16.ZIP	1.6	9k	a/c	J Duff
Toolkit 1	Plus other utilities	n/a			a/c	Purple Software

Databases

JBData		JBDAT141.ZIP	1.5	66k	a/c	J Boyce
DataView		n/a			a/c	Purple Software
DataView Pro	uprated from DataView	n/a			a/c	Purple Software
DataDeLuxe		n/a			a/c	Pocket & Soul

Drawing Packages

Draw		DRAW282.ZIP	2.82	58k		R Andrews
DrawIt	Vector drawing	n/a				Purple Software
Icon Draw	Icon editor only	ICONDRAW.ZIP		5k		J Duff
PicPoc		PIC3A.ZIP	2.59	95k		
S3A Draw		S3ADRAW3.ZIP	1.3	74k	a/c	A Richey
SNA Draw		SNADRAW0.ZIP	1.0	72k	S	A Richey
Paint & Compose	Includes music s/w	n/a				Widget Software

File Managers

3T		3T_132.ZIP	1.29	10k	a/c	R Muggleton
File Manager	Part of Toolkit 1	n/a			3/a/c/s	Purple Software
Filer		FILER.ZIP	2.2	68k	a/c	T Nemec
JBTree		JBTREE.ZIP	4.2.6	33k	3/a/c	J Boyce
SnFile		SNFILE11.ZIP	v1.1	24k	s	A Richey
Utils 3a		UTILS2.ZIP	2.3	45k	a/c	G P Tappenden

Finance Packages

Bank		BANK843.ZIP	v8.43	18k	3	P Sipple
S3A Invest	Investment tracker	s3ainv14.zip	1.4		a/c	A Richey
Finance Pack		n/a			a/c	Widget Software
BankPlus		BANKP210.ZIP	v2.1.07	36k	a/c	P Sipple
BankPlus		BANKS101.ZIP	v1.0.	30k	S	P Sipple
DP Bank		DPBANK15.ZIP	1.5	61K	a/c	D Pfund
Expense	Expense tracking	EXPENS10.ZIP	1.0	7k	3	J K Bjornsson
S3A Bank		S3ABNK18.ZIP	1.8d	257k	a/c	A Richey
Sna Bank		SNABANK1.ZIP	1.1	217k	S	A Richey

General utilities

BusyView	Agenda Monthly View	BUSYV120.ZIP	1.2	24k	a/c	L de Vries
GBatt	Battery Monitor	GBATT131.ZIP	1.1	8k	a/c	
JB Backup	Backup Utility	JBCKUP12.ZIP	1.4	15k	a/c	J Boyce
JB Find	File locator	JBFIND.ZIP	2.7b	20k	a/c	J Boyce
JBSort	Database sort	JBSORT13.ZIP	1.3b	12k	a/c	J Boyce

Jwin	Info/conversions	JWIN121F.ZIP	1.21	9k	a/c	P Spencer
MonthVu	Agenda Add-on	MONTHVU.ZIP	1.10d	27k	a/c	CESD
Pason	Password on startup	PASON4C.ZIP	4c	9k	a/c	A Lord
PassAgn	Agenda Password	PASAGN3A.ZIP	1.82f	9k	a/c	P Spencer
Unzip	ZIP file uncompressor	UNZIP.OPA	1.4	10k	a/c	

Miscellaneous Applications

Fit4Life	Health & Fitness	FIT4LIF3.ZIP	1.3	28k	3/a/c/S	S Litchfield
Geni	GEDCOM browser	GENI-111.ZIP	1.1	35k	a/c	M Dunstan
KallCost	Telephone call timer	n/a			3/a/c	Widget
Kgene	Genealogy package	KGENE107.ZIP	1.07	21k	a/c	K Groves
MemoVoc	Voice memo manager	MEMOVOC2.ZIP	2.0	24k	a/c	D Joyce
Notepad Deluxe	Project planner/outliner	n/a			a/c	Purple Software
Reader	Text reader	READER23.ZIP	2.3	83K	a/c	B Childress
Shoplist	Shopping List assistant	SLIST110.ZIP	1.1	32K	a/c	H Matthews
Sna Collect	Collection manager	S3ACOL12.ZIP	1.2	47K		A Richey
Toolkit 1		n/a			a/c	Purple Software
Toolkit 2		n/a			a/c	Purple Software

Mapping Software

GPS AutoRoute	GPS add-on for AutoRoute	AGPS10.ZIP	1.0	19k	a/c	M Rudin
GPS Mapping	GPS reader	GPSB0_09.ZIP		62k	a/c	S Taylor
Mapper GB		MAPA47.ZIP+	4.7	>100k	a/c	S Litchfield
Mapper GB		MAPS11.ZIP	1.1	83k	S	S Litchfield
Mapper Ireland		MAP115.ZIP	1.5	97k	a/c	S Litchfield
Tube 3a	London Underground			120k		SW Systems

Business

Contact Edge	Contact Manager	EDGE40.ZIP	4.0	49k	3/a/c	A Bosch
Plan	Project Manager	PLAN41.ZIP	4.1	100k	a/c	A Clarkson
ProPoc	Project Manager	PROPOP.ZIP	2.1	182k	a/c	B Daum

...Continued from page 66

due to more information and increased leading (space between lines). This and the use of symbols for describing keys gives the pages a more pleasing appearance.

Take the section in the 3a manual headed '*How information is stored*', In the new manual this is '*How is my information stored?*' The addition of 'my' may seem trivial, but in fact it is a perceptive change and I noticed subtle amendments like this throughout the book.

Another example: a sentence in the old manual reads: '*However, it is a very good idea to make backup copies of your information.*' This is now: '*You should make "backup" copies of your information*'.

The new index, too, is better, and includes entries such as 'merge', 'battery types', 'labels', 'moving files', 'wrapping text', etc., but I still could not find anything about transferring or exchanging files with a PC or Mac.

Now imagine this. You're a beginner and soon after getting your Psion it crashes, freezes, or whatever you call it. Frantically you turn to the manual. You look for 'Crash'. Nothing. 'Freeze' Nothing. 'Trouble-shooting'. The answer's there somewhere, but the index sometimes isn't much help.

Lost or stolen Psion?

It your Psion computer has been lost or stolen then you may be interested to know that a UK user has set up an independent worldwide service to keep track of the serial numbers of such machines. Here is the WWW address of the registry (which shows descriptions and serial numbers only—all personal information is kept offline):

http://ourworld.compuserve.com/homepages/groucho

If you do not have WWW access then you can send details by post, or send an SAE for a printed list of missing machines. Please send your name, address, telephone number, description of item lost or stolen and serial number(s)

Address to send to is:

Mark Avey
39 Union Street
Cheltenham
Gloucestershire GL52 2JN

An introduction to SHAREWARE

In the pages of *Palmtop* you'll read a lot about Shareware. Shareware is a goldmine of useful applications with something for everyone. The quality is amazing—there's so much to chose from, and it's cheap!

What is shareware?

Written by professional programmers and enthusiasts, shareware is normally supplied for use on a thirty day trial basis. If you like the software then you are expected to send a payment to the author. The programs themselves contain information on use and cost.

Where do I get it?

- Via a modem. Downloaded to your 3a/3c or your desktop computer from a online service such as CompuServe, AOL or CiX (in the UK), from an Internet Service Provider, or from a bulletin board.
- From the *3-Lib* shareware library. Software is supplied on 3½" PC floppy disc. See the advertisement section for details.
- From a PC-format CD-ROM. Available from leading Psion dealers, these discs contain stacks of useful programs and utilities.

How do I use it?

The software will need to be copied onto your Psion. Shareware will normally need un-compressing before you can use it. Programs to do this (such as PKZIP, S3UNZIP, Winzip and Zipit), are freely available from your shareware supplier. Unless you're getting your shareware on SSD, you'll also need some external hardware, such as:

- Serial Lead (3Link). Connect your 3a to a desktop machine (PC, Mac) or a modem.
- Cyclone drive. Connect a 3½" floppy disc drive to your 3a/3c.
- SSD RAM drive. Copy programs to a RAM SSD via your PC's printer port.

Further reading:

Shareware—What, Where & How
Page 43 of Issue 6

Connecting your Series 3 - P41, Issue 5

Going on-line - P40, Issue 1

SSD Drive - P41, Issue 7

CD-ROM - P20, Issue 7 , P19, Issue 4

Cyclone disk drive - P14, Issue 7

Pete Sipple

Memory cards & upgrades

LOWER PRICES!

RAM cards: 2Mb - £477 4Mb - £752 Flash cards: 4Mb - £279 8Mb - £498

If you would rather upgrade your existing Psion SSD, the following upgrades are available:

RAM UPGRADES (Prices include VAT & UK postage)

128k → 512k	£89
128k → 1Mb	£208
128k → 2Mb	£459
128k → 4Mb	£738
512k → 2Mb	£381
512k → 4Mb	£696
1Mb → 2Mb	£335
1Mb → 4Mb	£645
2Mb → 4Mb	£362

FLASH UPGRADES (More sizes now available!)

128k → 256k	£29
128k → 512k	£72
128k → 1Mb	£87
128k → 2Mb	£168
128k → 4Mb	£283
128k → 8Mb	£504
256k → 512k	£56
256k → 1Mb	£78
256k → 2Mb	£164
256k → 4Mb	£274
256k → 8Mb	£495

FLASH UPGRADES

512k → 1Mb	£60
512k → 2Mb	£159
512k → 4Mb	£261
512k → 8Mb	£483
1Mb → 2Mb	£105
1Mb → 4Mb	£221
1Mb → 8Mb	£424
2Mb → 4Mb	£185
2Mb → 8Mb	£382
4Mb → 8Mb	£303

We now offer 24 hour turnaround on most upgrades (subject to availability)—ring for details!
All products carry a one year parts & labour guarantee, and are 100% compatible!
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Tel: 0181 682 3313 Fax: 0181 682 4414 CompuServe: 100121,1165

POS Ltd

Pinnock Organiser Services offer you speedy and convenient service and repairs for your Psion machines and accessories. We are authorised by Psion and aim to provide the highest standards of service. Post your items to us with payment for return in 3 days or visit us by appointment. The standard service costs just £35.

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Think Psion, Think P.O.S.itive

APPROVED PSION Service Centre

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mobile: 0831 194985 email: 106051.2651@compuserve.com

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Specialist PSION Dealer

All new machines now supplied with a free booklet of frequently asked questions!

We specialise in Psion and carry the range of machines, software and accessories at competitive prices.

All our machines come fully tested with both sets of batteries installed, together with some additional utility software free of charge.

We can deliver most items next day in the UK and deliver all over the world.

Phone us or visit our World Wide Web page to get a complete product listing.

Clove Technology
Friendly, informed service at good prices-we try just that little bit harder !

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Fax 01202 300419
WWW - http://intertrader.com/computers/clove/

43 Springbank Road
Bournemouth
BH7 7EL

Email: 100255.3642
@compuserve.com

Full size keyboard for your Psion

If you enjoy the portability of your Psion palmtop but are frustrated by the small keyboard, mis-typed characters and hand fatigue when typing large documents and data, then this could be the solution. A standard PC-style keyboard connected to your Psion via a keyboard interface module.

The interface Module is supplied with software on 3.5" disk and power link lead (enables Psion (not Siena) and interface to be powered together) and requires battery or adaptor and suitable PC link lead such as that supplied with PsiWin. For battery operation a low power keyboard is highly recommended. Not all printers have been verified as compatible.

Connection to the Psion 3a, 3c and Siena is through the serial link lead. Interface and keyboard can be powered externally or by battery. Optional Extras include the Cherry portable keyboard (a low power compact keyboard ideal for battery operation) and a parallel printer connection.

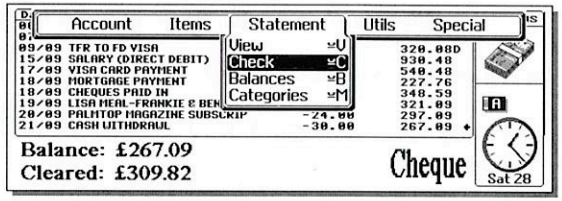
Prices: Interface Module £67, Cherry keyboard £58. Printer option £10, P&P £5 per item.
To order: Send cheque, payable to Dr K R Baker,
38 Ferndale Road, Marchwood, Southampton SO40 4XR
Fax/voice mail: (9am-5pm GMT), voice (evenings)
01703 864310 e-mail: krb@ecs.soton.ac.uk
www: http://diana.ecs.soton.ac.uk/~krb/kb-info.html

"...it simply works, and works well." — Palmtop Magazine

BankPlus

Can you manage without it?

- Verifies bank statements
- Pays standing orders
- Exports to text or Quicken
- Graphical display
- Currency conversion
- Small and easy to use



Manage your money and stay in the black with BankPlus, the easy way to keep your bank and credit card statements in order. Versions available for the Series 3a/3c, Siena and Series 3 Classic.

"Smart & fabulously simple" - *What PC* "Well crafted" - *Steve Litchfield*

"Operation is entirely straightforward" - *Palmtop Magazine*

Fully registered version on 3.5" disk for £9. Send a cheque or credit card details to: Pete Sipple, 51 Eastwood Boulevard, Westcliff-on-Sea, Essex SS0 0BY

E-mail psipple@cix.compulink.co.uk for details, or download the latest version from http://members.aol.com/petesipple/bankplus.htm

Mobile Software

"What you want, when & where you want it"

Information in your pocket!

If you, your staff or your colleagues need access to subsets of your company's information when on the move, join the increasing number of Psion 3a/3c users who have such access via our Mobile Pages generic database products

tel / fax: 0181-906-0002
e-mail: info@mobilepages.com
Web: http://www.mobilepages.com

Mapping the British Isles

Towns, roads, overlays, navigation, information, GPS moving map, town plans, code lookups, distance logging/export !

Mapper-3a/GB and Mapper-3a/Ireland are fully working shareware for the Psion 3a and Acorn Pocketbook II computers.
Download from http://ourworld.compuserve.com/homepages/slitchfield or send self-addressed envelope, formatted floppy disk and £1.50 in loose stamps to:
Steve Litchfield, 22 Grays Crescent, Woodley, Reading, RG5 3EN

RMR Software

[formerly 'Alan Richey Shareware Software']
All the Software you need to run your life !!

(Note: 'S3A' programs (i.e. S3ABANK) also run on S3C, 'SNA' programs (i.e. SNABANK) are only for the Siena)

S3ABANK & SNABANK Personal Accounts Suite £20 (30US$)

The most comprehensive Shareware financial package available for the Psion Series of palmtop computers, with well over 1200 registered users. As well as the usual financial functions, including full Quicken compatibility, both Import and Export, this program also includes (for free) the following 5 programs as fully-integrated optional modules.

S3AEXP & SNAEXP Expense Account Monitor £10 (15US$)

This program allows you to monitor your Expense Account, allocating entries to categories and reconciling them once they are claimed. It also includes an optional company car monitor, where usage can also be allocated to categories.

S3AFUEL & SNAFUEL Fuel Consumption Monitor £7 (10US$)

This program allows you to track the fuel consumption for up to 10 vehicles. It is fully configurable, allowing entry and/or display in miles/kilometers and litres/galls. Full details of the previous entries are available, as well as a graphical representation.

S3AHOME & SNAHOME Home Inventory Monitor £7 (10US$)

This program allows you to keep track of the value of your household possessions for insurance purposes. It is based on the Home Inventory module produced for Quicken. At regular intervals you can update all the Items for inflation, and print out the details.

S3AINVEST & SNAINVEST Investment Performance £7 (10US$)

This program allows you to keep track of up to 50 investments. The main screen holds all the details of each investment, including latest price and total value of the portfolio. A second screen then gives a graphical representation of the historical performance.

S3APLAN & SNAPLAN Financial Budget Calendar £7 (10US$)

This program you to run a household budget account. Up to 30 Agencies can be entered, and monthly bill values assigned and then reconciled as they are paid. The program is based on the Financial Planner module produced for Quicken.

S3ATASK Extended ToDo Manager £10 (15US$)

This program allows you to use an alternative method to the Agenda for recording and managing your tasks that have to be accomplished. It breaks down large projects into tasks of manageable size, categorising, setting priorities, sorting and ordering them.

S3ADRAW & SNADRAW Drawing/Icon Viewer/Editor £10 (15US$)

This program allows you to view, edit or design pictures and icons. It comprises three components, a Picture Viewer, a Picture Editor and an Icon Editor. These allow you to view existing pictures or design, create, and edit bitmap picture or Icons

S3ACOLLECT & SNACOLLECT Collection Manager £7 (10US$)

This program allows you to handle a database of a collection such as records, stamps, books etc. The difference with this program is that as well as the labels being configurable, the screen display, printout and sorting method are also fully configurable.

F A Richey
6001 Natick Court
Burke, VA 22015
USA

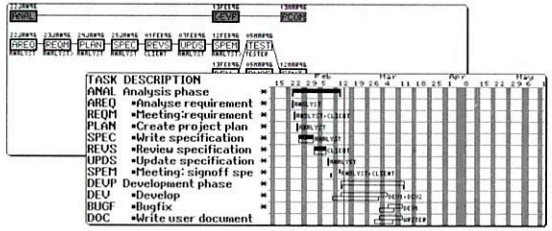
E-Mail: alanrichey@msn.com
All the programs are available on the World Wide Web at:
http://members.aol.com/alanrichey
or on CompuServe, America-On-Line, CIX, & MSN
or at: ftp://ftp.nwt.com/S3A & ftp://ftp.nwt.com/Siena
or by sending a 3.5" disc and stamped addressed envelope to one of the addresses here

F A Richey
C/O Sonas
Calgary
Isle of Mull
Argyle PA75 6QT
SCOTLAND

Plan

Project Planning on the Psion 3a/3c

- View & update your project plans, anywhere, anytime
- Enter tasks, dependencies and resource details
- Gantt & Pert charts
- Calculate end dates
- Track progress
- Interface to MS Project
- Shareware - £15



Also available - advanced Psion OPL programming tools:

OPP Extends the OPL language ('C' style preprocessor, 'C' style structures, multi-dimensional arrays,...). Psion and PC versions (can be used from an MSDOS prompt or with ODE) - £10.

OPPDBG Runtime source level debugger for OPL programs - £10.

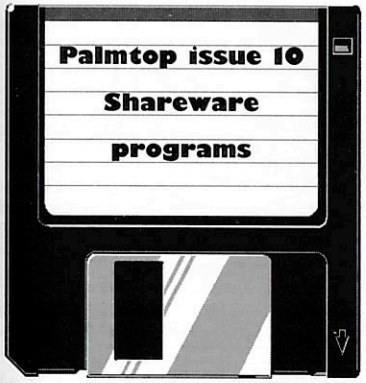
Plan, OPP and OPPDBG are publicly available as shareware from WWW, CompuServe, CIX, Psion FTP and BBS sites, or by sending a 3.5" disk to the address below:

Andy Clarkson, 23 Worcester Avenue, Hardwick, Cambridgeshire CB3 7XG UK.

Telephone: +44 (0)1954 210899 E-mail: 100661.2440@compuserve.com

WWW: http://ourworld.compuserve.com/homepages/andyc

Can't find it?



The shareware and freeware programs featured in each issue of *Palmtop* are all available—either from the major FTP sites, authors' WWW sites, or from the major online services

As a new service for *Palmtop* readers, *3-Lib* are now offering a standard 3½" PC floppy disk containing *all* the programs featured in this issue for the the benefit of anyone having difficulty finding what they want

Contact: 3-Lib Library, 22 Grays Crescent, Woodley, Reading RG5 3EN telephone: (01734) 265081

Only £5 including worldwide postage!

MemoVoc-3

for Psion 3a/3c

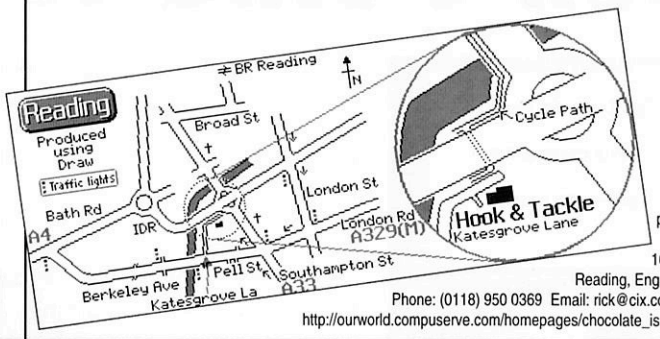
now you're talking

Contact David Joyce, Estuary Technologies, 2 Seabury Parade, Malahide, Co Dublin, Ireland

Telephone: 00-353-1-8450694 Email: 101520.1250@compuserve.com

Chocolate Island Software

DRAW



For more info, please contact:
Rick Andrews
16 Alpine Street
Reading, England RG1 2QA
Phone: (0118) 950 0369 Email: rick@cix.compulink.co.uk
http://ourworld.compuserve.com/homepages/chocolate_island_software/

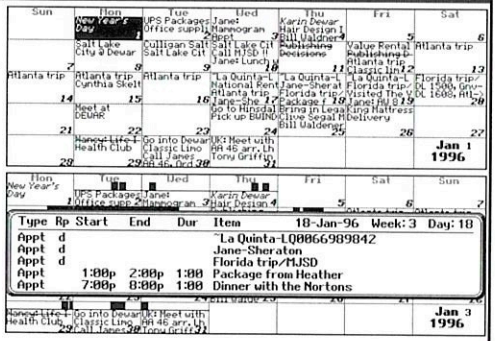
- The best-selling shareware bitmap editor for the Psion Series 3a - only £10
- Real-time Zoom, Pattern fill, Variable width lines, Undo and more
- Print to Epson, IBM, Canon and HP printers

PIMLICO SOFTWARE

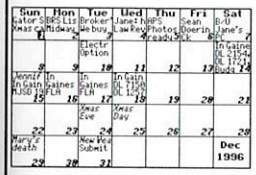
The screen shots say it all!

MonthVu

View a whole month at a time with all text shown! $20/£15



Now available for the Siena!

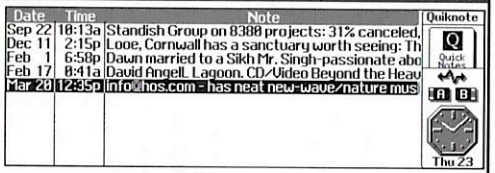


Type Rp Start End Dur Item 18-Jan-96 Week:3 Day:18
Appt d "La Quinta-LQ0866989842
Appt d Jane-Sheraton
Appt d Florida trip/MJSD
Appt 1:00p 2:00p 1:00 Package from Heather
Appt 7:00p 8:00p 1:00 Dinner with the Nortons

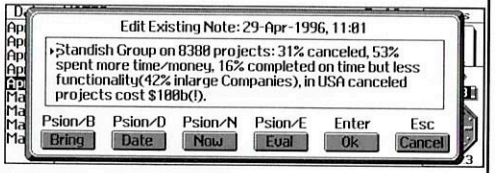
- Automatically closes and restarts Agenda application invisibly in the background
- Automatically (option) updates display whenever a change is made to the agenda file
- Shows graphical timelines of your appointments
- Searches for free time slots in your schedule
- Brings up the appointments for the selected day in a dialog where more text can be read

QuikNote

The best quick note taker for the Psion! $15/£10


Date Time Note Quiknote
Sep 22 10:13a Standish Group on 8388 projects: 31% canceled,
Dec 11 2:15p Looe, Cornwall has a sanctuary worth seeing: Th
Feb 1 6:58p Dawn married to a Sikh Mr. Singh-passionate abo
Feb 17 8:41a David Angell Lagoon, CD/Video Beyond the Heau
Mar 28 12:35p info@hos.com - has neat new-wave/nature mus
Quick Notes
A B
Thu 23

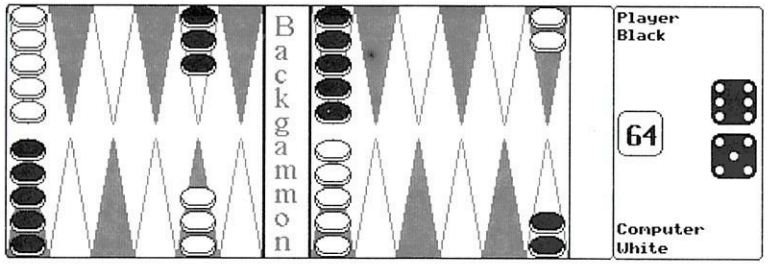
Now available for the Siena!


Edit Existing Note: 29-Apr-1996, 11:81
Standish Group on 8388 projects: 31% canceled, 53% spent more time/money, 16% completed on time but less functionality(42% inlarge Companies), in USA canceled projects cost $188b(!).
Psion/B Bring
Psion/D Date
Psion/N Now
Psion/E Eval
Enter Ok
Esc Cancel

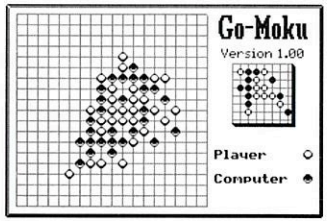
- Tap On button twice and QuikNote opens a new note when the Psion is turned on
- Notes can be stored in multiple database files and sorted forwards and backwards
- View of notes can be filtered by a text string, so only matching notes are displayed.
- Supports Bring to/from other Psion Application programs
- Provides a library of keyboard shortcuts, so CTRL+Letter can insert a word or phrase

11622 West 87th Street • Burr Ridge, IL 60521-6462 • U.S.A.
630-850-9336 • Fax: 630-850-9322 • cesd@compuserve.com
http://ourworld.compuserve.com/homepages/cesd

Classic Psion Games



- Play against the Psion, a human opponent or watch the Psion play itself
- Smart user moves, a selected piece will jump to each legal position in turn
- Undo user moves, re-display the computer's moves
- Move hints and extensive on-line help
- Doubling and re-doubling
- Board position set up with multiple roll outs
- Save and retrieve games. Records games played and points scored to date
- Four play levels, probably the most challenging Psion version available
- Backgammon is available for the Series 3a/c, Siena and Workabout



Go-Moku, a classic Japanese board game. Get five pieces in a line before the computer. Play on one of five levels of attack over defence, or select auto play and watch the computer play itself. Automatically records games played and points scored to date. Go-Moku is available for the Series 3a/3c/Siena.

	Floppy disk	*SSD*
Backgammon	*£19.95*	*£26.95*
Go-Moku	*£11.95*	*£19.95*
both games	*£27.95*	*£29.95*

EMCC

All prices include UK postage and VAT, all major credits cards accepted.

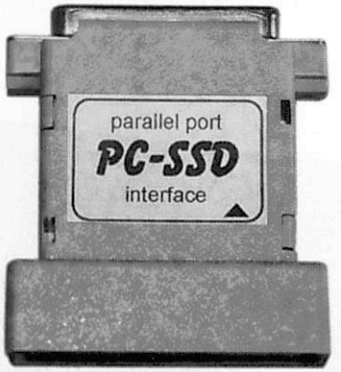
23 Summerfield Drive, Moulton, Northwich CW9 8PU, Cheshire, UK.

Tel: +44 (0)1606 861027 e-mail ple@cix.compulink.co.uk
or 100533.1726@compuserve.com

available in English, French, German and Italian!

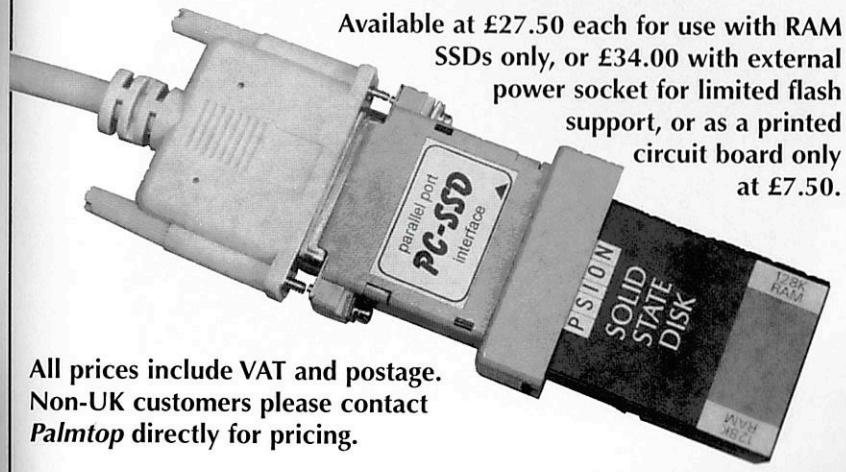
Super-fast file transfers from your SSDs!

Perform super-fast backup, restore and general file transfers between your RAM SSDs and a PC's parallel (Centronics) port—all from within Microsoft Windows. Also backup, restore and format flash SSDs (under DOS only)



Available only through *Palmtop*, the famous PC-SSD drive—as featured in the do-it-yourself construction article in issue 7. Either order a copy of issue 7 and build it for yourself, or buy one from us!

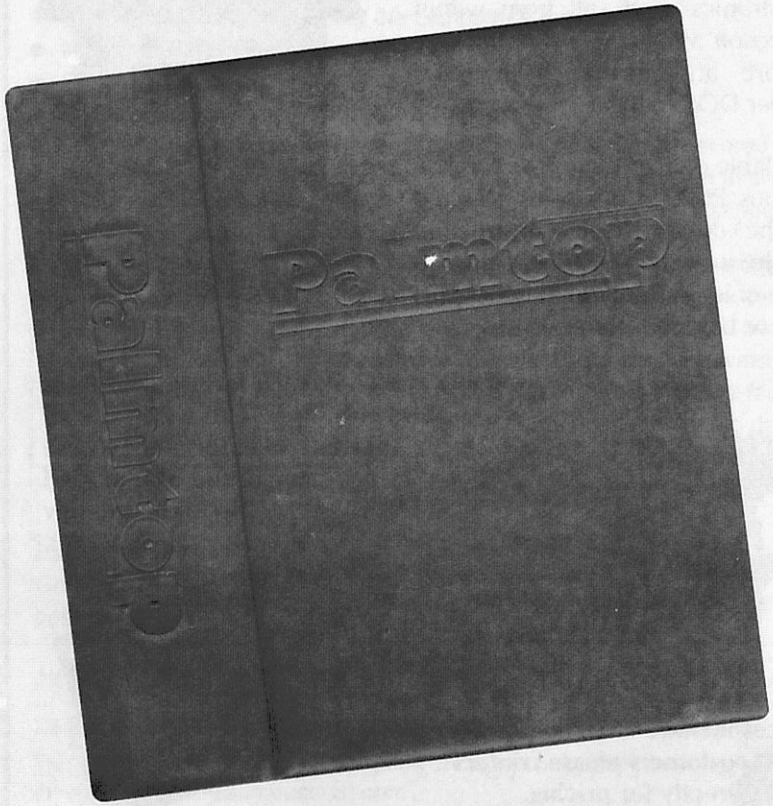
Available at £27.50 each for use with RAM SSDs only, or £34.00 with external power socket for limited flash support, or as a printed circuit board only at £7.50.



All prices include VAT and postage. Non-UK customers please contact *Palmtop* directly for pricing.

Bind it!

Keep your precious back-issues of *Palmtop* in these handsome and sturdy two-tone grey binders. Each binder securely holds six issues plus an index volume, and has the *Palmtop* logo embossed into the thick cushioned vinyl cover and spine



Binders are available now, at the following prices:

UK - £5.50 each, including VAT and postage.

Europe - £6.50 each, including VAT (tax) and postage.

Elsewhere - £8.00 each, including postage (no VAT payable).

Resubscribing

Some readers have contacted us to ask when their resubscription is due. Don't worry—everyone will automatically receive a reminder with their last issue, so there is no danger that you will miss anything.

Palmtop Tee shirts

Following on from the enormous response for *Palmtop* binders, a number of readers have also expressed an interest in tee shirts.

We will be having tee shirts produced sometime in early 1997. Please look out for announcements in a future issue of *Palmtop*.

Next Issue...

Planned for issue 11:

- A major review of portable printers for your Psion
- We talk about databases with Stuart Ballan of Mobile Software...
- We look at date handling in the Psion spreadsheet—how to make it work
- Connecting to Acorn computers—the next in our connectivity series
- The start of a new series for beginners—the inside story on Solid State Disks!
- Reviews of the Psion PCMCIA modem adaptor, the Parallel Print Link, TimeBase 6, PsiFax software, the latest *On-Board Software* releases, the Zarian Encyclopedia, and the new shareware CD-ROM
- Plus all the usual features, and more...